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YOUNG IRELAND

THE BIRTH OF "THE NATION," 1842.
(*From a Drawing by* J. F. O'Hea.)

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YOUNG IRELAND

A Fragment of Irish History

1840-45

FINAL REVISION

ILLUSTRATED

BY

THE HON. SIR CHARLES GAVAN DUFFY
K.C.M.G.

VOLUME I

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

I HAVE written this book in the intervals of a busy life, because I believed it was the best service I could render to Ireland. It contains a memoir of the public affairs of that country during a period of abnormal political activity; a period to which may be traced, as to their fountain-head, many of the opinions now universally current among the Irish people.

My first aim was to make a new generation familiar with the truthfulness, simplicity, and genuine moderation of the men with whom it was said "a new soul came into Ireland." The Young Ireland party, as their enemies in the first instance named them, and as they came in the end to name themselves, after having been long misrepresented, have in later times been vindicated and applauded more than enough, but they have never, I think, been understood. What they aimed to do, and what they accomplished, their actual motives and their means of action, as disclosed in their private correspondence, and interpreted by one who shared their counsels, are set down in this book for the first time; and will be found, I think, worthy of study by statesmen and publicists accustomed to meditate on the affairs of Ireland.

Another aim, if I may venture to say so, was to appeal to the conscience of the best class of Englishmen. If they should think proper to study, with reasonable pains, the brief period

embraced in this narrative, they will have no difficulty in understanding a problem which has sometimes perplexed them—why Irishmen not deficient in public spirit or probity were eager to break away from the Union and from all connection with England. Whoever desires to understand why Ireland is distressed and discontented, while England is prosperous and loyal, must assuredly seek the causes in history; for to-day is the child and heir of yesterday. It is easy to comprehend the loathing sensitive Englishmen feel in descending into the catacombs of the Past, and handling the skeletons and cerements of historic crimes; but I invite them to look at transactions which are not remote or ghastly, which happened in their own day, for which they cannot altogether evade a personal responsibility; and to consider how far these transactions account for the state of opinion in Ireland.

More than a generation has passed since the events occurred which I have undertaken to record. A larger experience of mankind, the responsibilities of political office, and leisure for reflection, have, I trust, enabled me to scrutinise them from a new point of view, and to revise whatever was rash or ungenerous in earlier judgments. I have lived a quarter of a century among Englishmen, as their associate, colleague, or competitor, and I would not willingly wound their self-respect. But it would be a waste of life to write such a book, and abate or conceal the truth. I have striven to be fair and temperate, but I have not hidden away anything which it was essential to disclose; and I am convinced that confusion and disaster will continue to mark the relation between the islands, till Englishmen confront the facts courageously, and with a determination to discover the spring-head from which discord flows.

I have given the narrative the form of personal recollections because I speak of proceedings which I have seen and shared; and I desire to keep before the reader the fact that it is the

testimony of an actor in the scenes, who cannot avoid personal sympathies and prejudices. But I have written with half the circumference of the globe between me and the scene of action, at a time when the chief actors are dead, and when I myself must soon follow them, and when I have no longer anything to ask or fear from fortune.

The authorities for facts not within my own knowledge are indicated in the text or the notes. The most important contribution to them was the correspondence addressed to me as Editor of the *Nation* by men of various classes and parties during the entire period treated of. To this collection has been added the voluminous correspondence addressed to Smith O'Brien and Thomas Davis, and that of John Dillon and Thomas MacNevin, entrusted to me by their respective families, the papers of Thomas Francis Meagher, which he gave me before leaving Ireland, the correspondence of Davis with Daniel Owen Maddyn, and the Minutes and Correspondence of the Irish Confederation, confided to me on the dissolution of that body.

In this narrative O'Connell while he lived was necessarily a chief figure. His fame in all civilised countries, and the affectionate remembrance in which he is held in Ireland, bespeak a favourable interpretation of his conduct whenever it is in controversy. But it must not be forgotten that the young men who were for a time in conflict with him have since been scattered over the world by the blast of adversity, and have everywhere proved themselves to be men of honour and ability — men plainly entitled to be heard with patience in the counsels of their country, against any adversary.

That the narrative may serve the purposes for which it was written, or any useful purpose, the first condition is that it shall be not only accurate, but just; and that it shall not be ungenerous in its justice. I have aimed to give it this character;

whenever there was question of motives, or of competing policies, or of personal reputation, I have not slurred over the difficulty, but have striven as scrupulously to be fair as if I were engaged on a last confession. What I have written is at any rate what I profoundly believe to be true; and time, I trust, will show that it contains little or nothing which any man can gainsay.

The thoughtful reader will not fail to note that the narrative at bottom is not the history of certain men, but essentially the history of certain principles. Controversy, rather than meditation, is the nursing mother of popular opinion; and to the controversies and conflicts which I have undertaken to record may be traced back, for the most part, the opinions which influence the public mind of Ireland at present, or promise to influence it in any considerable degree, among the generation now entering on public life.

LONDON, *October* 1880.

PREFACE TO THE FINAL EDITION

AFTER an interval of more than fifteen years I return to this book to revise it for the last time. I have reason to be content and grateful for the reception it met, and I would willingly express my gratitude by making it less unworthy of popular favour. The critical press in England, Ireland, America, and Australia received it for the most part with generous sympathy. When the book was originally published several of the Young Irelanders were still living: Judge O'Gorman in New York, Judge O'Hagan in Dublin, Denny Lane in Cork, P. J. Smythe and Martin MacDermott in London; and it is a great satisfaction to me to know that they all took occasion to declare in some public and emphatic manner that this was an authentic and unprejudiced record of the transactions with which it deals. The families of those who had died furnished me with their private correspondence, and were content with the use I made of it.

I may note that subsequent writers on Irish history have largely adopted this book as the basis of their narrative in the period with which it deals.

I aimed to give this work a fidelity to fact, which time or change could not shake. The acknowledgment of this accuracy by the men chiefly concerned was a great satisfaction to me. But a rarer testimony is the judgment of one who has traversed

some of the same ground. The late Mr A. M. Sullivan, who was such a skilled witness, when he read the volume, wrote to me in this generous spirit: "As you would see by my chapter on him in 'New Ireland'" (he said), "I had judged that the same O'Connell did not come out of jail that went into it on the 30th May 1844; but I thought it a duty to abstain from tracing the gangrene. Even so, I feel you are the truer historian, and your moral level is the higher one in telling 'the truth and the whole truth.' He fell, like many a noble tree, killed and dragged down by parasitical growths 'attached' to him, but not until he had done great and noble service."

The Irish people have instinctively adopted the same generous judgment in the premises. They honour O'Connell for his great services from '29 to '44, without adopting a tittle of the opinions and policy for the sake of which, in his later days, he permitted his son to wreck the National party and the National cause.

"Young Ireland" was first published in London in 1880 by Messrs Cassell & Co., and immediately afterwards in New York by Messrs Appleton in an authorised edition, and a little later by Mr Munro of the same city in a totally unauthorised edition. Mr George Robertson of Melbourne in 1881 issued an edition of a convenient size and shape which had a large circulation in Australia; and in the same year a translation of a portion of it into French was published in Paris, first in a political Review and afterwards in a separate volume, "La Jeune Irlande," by Messieurs Blériot et Gautier. As the price of a guinea, at which it was originally issued, greatly limited its circulation in Ireland, I sanctioned in 1883 an Irish People's Edition by Messrs Gill, from which I accepted no profit on the condition of its being published at a price which would make it available to the mass of the people. All these editions are now out of print, and I hope to substitute for them this one, carefully revised and

enriched by genuine portraits of the *dramatis personæ* of the narrative. As I possessed portraits and curios of the period which were in some cases unique, I thought it desirable that the final edition should be an illustrated one, and become a record of much that was interesting and characteristic of the period. "Young Ireland" has been the subject of correspondence which, if published, would make a volume of the same size, and perhaps of equal interest. I take one letter from the mass, because it gave me pleasure, which the sympathetic reader will perhaps share, by exhibiting the effect which the *Nation* sometimes produced on its habitual readers, and illustrating its constant aim to make better men as well as better Irishmen.

CINCINNATI, O., *April* 17, 1883.

"I am a pupil of the old *Nation*. I was seventeen years old when its first number saw the light. Upon the downfall of all our hopes, I came to America in '49. If my life has been clean and useful, it is, next to the grace of God, owing to the teaching of the great paper.

"Most certainly, in a secular sense, a higher view of personal dignity, of truthfulness, of proper pride, sprang from its teachings. Now, when I am fifty-six years old, I rejoice that I have known and studied the lives of the great men who gathered round yourself and Davis. In my humble way I have always striven to propagate their teachings, and my children and grandchildren are familiar with their names and work, and love them dearly. I yesterday got the second volume of your work, and I sat up until two o'clock devouring it. I was back again amid the scenes of my boyhood, and felt once more the thrill of its passionate purposes. God bless you for this last great and loving labour! It will educate the future. I had the pleasure of spending an evening with Mr A. M. Sullivan during his recent visit to our city, and went over with him in familiar talk the beautiful path of youth. He promised to bear my loving message to you. 'Tell Mr Duffy,' I said,

'that you found here men who were students of the great *Nation*, and who continue to take its teachings into their hearts for all these long years, and whose recollection of many of them was as vivid as when they first read them.' JOSEPH P. CARBERY."

I have supervised this edition at so great a distance from the place of publication that the task would have been almost impossible but for the aid of my friend, Martin MacDermott, the only survivor of the band of young poets who made the *Nation* memorable, to whose taste and judgment, especially as regards the illustrations, I am under deep obligation.

There is one purpose which this book may always be counted upon to serve: those to whom the Irish question is new will find in it the sentiments and convictions of some of the most generous and gifted Irishmen who ever meditated on the affairs of their country. They may sometimes be mistaken in their judgment, but they are never wilfully unjust to opponents, or consciously unfair to anyone.

C. GAVAN DUFFY.

NICE, *March* 1896.

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BOOK I.

YOUNG IRELAND.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

HOW THE REPEAL MOVEMENT BEGAN.

In the spring of 1840 an event occurred in Ireland charged with grave and far-reaching consequences, but which at the time attracted slight notice, chiefly of a mocking or contemptuous sort. Daniel O'Connell had long been the idol of his countrymen; but popularity is a tide whose ebb, though irregular, is certain; and at this time it ran low with the popular tribune. He had reached the age of physical decay, being midway between his sixtieth and seventieth year; his mind had been much disturbed of late by public and private cares, and his career for many years past had not been graced by any conspicuous success. It was under these circumstances that he suddenly invited the Irish nation to unite with him in the stupendous task of repealing the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland. The Union, which had lasted for more than a generation, had been repeatedly assailed before; first by the party of Protestant Ascendancy, and again and again by the Catholics; and he proposed that the discontent of the nation, which slumbered for long intervals but had never become quite extinct, should be awakened once more and guided to its aim, on this occasion by a political Association—an agency which had more than once played a decisive part in the recent history of the country.

A national demand made by a man who was indisputably leader of the great bulk of his nation has seldom been made under circumstances more unpromising. In political movements nothing is more embarrassing than a false start, and O'Connell had already made a false

start. Ten years earlier, while his recent triumph in the long contest for Catholic Emancipation surrounded his name with a halo of invincibility, he had made a similar appeal to the country; and at the general election of 1832 nearly half the representatives chosen for Ireland were pledged "Repealers," as the advocates of a National Parliament came to be called.[1] In the larger constituencies no capacity or services were sufficient to secure the election of a candidate who did not share the desire of the country for Self-government. But in two or three years he abandoned this purpose, in order to propose to the English people the alternative of establishing what was called "equal justice,"—that is to say, laws and an Executive in Ireland as free from deliberate party bias as they were in England and Scotland. At the same time several of the Repeal members relinquished their seats to accept appointments under the system which they had recently been pledged to overthrow. This acceptance of office, however, did not outrage popular feeling, as it would have done at a later period. Catholic Emancipation had only recently become law, and there was a natural desire to see Catholics occupying places of authority from which they had been excluded since the Revolution of 1688. For a time every appointment of a Catholic was welcomed as a new triumph over Protestant Ascendancy, and a new security for the fair administration of law and of the public departments. But this sentiment succumbed in a great degree to the enthusiasm for nationality, and O'Connell seriously disturbed the confidence even of devoted adherents when he permitted his son and his sons-in-law to exchange the office of popular representative for that of salaried functionary under the British Government. The mass of the people had not lost faith in him either on this account or in consequence of his abrupt change of policy; they were persuaded that he was doing what he believed best for their interest; but many of them had utterly lost faith in Repeal of the Union, and regarded the occasional demand of it merely as a weapon flourished in the face of England to extort other concessions. This was the result of the false start.

The period at which he took up the question anew was calculated to deepen these suspicions. During the latter half of the six years which followed the abandonment of the first Repeal movement, O'Connell had been a close Parliamentary ally of the Whig party, vindicating his preference for them by the purer administration of justice and the fairer distribution of patronage which they established in Ireland. As they

[1] The members were 40 out of 105.

were plainly about to fall from power in 1840, to make way for the second administration of Sir Robert Peel, the announcement that the Repeal agitation would be immediately renewed was naturally denounced as a device for embarrassing the Conservatives in the interest of the Whigs.

And O'Connell himself, though he maintained his authority over the bulk of the people nearly unimpaired, was no longer the formidable tribune of 1832. In the ten years since Emancipation, he had paid the progressive tax which envy punctually levies on eminence—in being constantly maligned. He had been the chief instrument in overthrowing a sectarian ascendancy, which during five generations gave a small minority of the nation all the power and patronage of the State; and of those who had lost this monopoly many could not forgive him. He had competed successfully with the landed gentry for the political control which they had long exercised at elections, and from time to time had menaced their feudal exactions as landowners with Parliamentary scrutiny, and they had come instinctively to hate and resist everything in which he was concerned. These might be regarded as the natural enemies of a popular tribune, but his natural allies were nearly as ill prepared for the new movement. He had excited the animosity of the organised trades by denouncing trade combinations, and the enthusiasm of the peasantry was somewhat abated by constant appeals made to them by his enemies to note the fact, that though Catholic squires got seats in Parliament, and Catholic barristers got silk gowns and ermine capes, no appreciable benefit had descended on the farmhouses or cabins. The necessary staff-officers of a national agitation were still more difficult to obtain than the rank and file. His chief associates in the Catholic struggle had long ago grown cold and fallen off, and they were replaced by inferior men, or their places left vacant. And his enemies, in the class from which the staff-officers of agitation are usually drawn, were constantly augmented by his caustic criticism on public affairs. Criticism was one of the duties of his position as a national tribune; but in truth he liked the task when the duty was not very clear. That he should be subjected to rancorous reprisals was in the nature of things; and he often furnished plausible occasion by a strong man's disregard of appearances. Two instances, then quite recent, will illustrate the sort of charges which he had to meet, and which, however effectually met, thinned the rank of gentlemen around him.

Mr Raphael, ex-sheriff of London, a prosperous Armenian trades-

man, whom O'Connell had recommended as a candidate to an Irish county, having lost his seat before a Parliamentary Committee, charged his patron with having attempted to make money by the election, and with having afterwards offered to procure him a baronetcy from the Whig Government as the price of silence on the transaction. A select committee acquitted O'Connell of having had any pecuniary interest in the election; but the controversy created a deep dislike in Ireland to the system of nominating obscure strangers to be Irish representatives, and to the relations towards an English Cabinet which made it possible to offer a baronetcy as a *solatium* to the defeated candidate—for of this part of the story, which rested on a letter in O'Connell's handwriting, there could be no question. The popular press was blind and vehement in its defence of the transaction in all its details, but it was not unusual to hear influential adherents whisper that when the farmers of Carlow were induced to defy their arbitrary landlords at the hustings it ought to have been for some higher purpose than to procure a title for a successful Cockney confectioner.[1]

The other incident happened in Ireland, and was more disastrous in its consequences. The renewed Repeal movement had been immediately preceded by a political organisation called the Precursor Society —a name which implied that unless equal justice was conceded by Parliament the Society was only the "precursor" to a demand for self-government. Mr Peter Purcell, an opulent stage-coach proprietor, and a country gentleman of considerable property, who was a conspicuous member of this body, suddenly resigned on the ground that he had in vain endeavoured to persuade O'Connell to allow the funds of the society to rest in the hands of the treasurer and trustees ostensibly appointed to take charge of them, instead of being lodged in a country branch bank to his personal credit. In truth, O'Connell, who was treated on the footing of an absolute sovereign by his immediate political adherents, thought, and was to a large extent justified in thinking, that the funds were subscribed because *he* asked for them, and were intended to be spent at his discretion. Had he openly proclaimed and acted on this conviction, it is probable that the subscriptions would not have been seriously diminished in amount; but acting upon it, not only without proclaiming it, but while publicly repudiating it as a calumny, had alienated many supporters, who now

[1] The Raphael correspondence was spread over the latter half of 1836, four years before the establishment of the Repeal Association.

either stood coldly apart or had gone with Mr Purcell into active opposition.[1]

A more serious difficulty confronted him in the fact that the Catholic Clergy, who had been the local executive of all his past Associations, had now special ground for doubt and distrust. There were nearly three thousand priests in Ireland, an enormous staff, if they could be enlisted in the cause. But it was extremely doubtful. Nearly ten years earlier O'Connell had placed himself at the head of a movement which suddenly sprang up in the midland counties and rapidly spread over three provinces, to abolish tithes—tithes being an impost mainly levied off Catholic peasants, who were not able to afford themselves dwellings or food fit for human beings, to support a Church whose Bishops accumulated fortunes as colossal in amount and almost as iniquitous in their origin as the fortunes of Roman proconsuls. The hatred of tithe among the Catholic people was fierce and universal, and many of the Protestant landowners were not unwilling to encourage this sentiment, probably regarding the profuse revenues of the Establishment as so much deducted from their natural right to the entire earnings of their tenantry. The resistance speedily became formidable; the peasantry of Leinster and Munster were pledged in public meetings never again to pay the "accursed impost." Cattle seized for tithe arrears could find no purchasers; attempts to make seizures were in several cases resisted; a number of the malcontents were shot by the police under circumstances which provoked bitter wrath; and, finally, a party of police engaged in a tithe seizure were fallen upon and massacred by the people. The clergy of the Established Church were in sore distress during this protracted struggle, their entire income in some cases having been suddenly withheld.

The Government which carried Parliamentary Reform, confident in its great power and popularity, attempted to dispose of the difficulty. An act was passed which authorised a loan of a million for the immediate relief of the clergy, and transferred to the Executive Government the duty of collecting the arrears which they claimed. But to collect the arrears was a task beyond the power even of a popular Government. Jails were soon filled with prisoners arrested for trifling amounts, often not exceeding a shilling; sometimes not exceeding a penny. But the result of these vigorous measures was not reassuring; the costs of suits were found to exceed in the proportion of two to one

[1] Mr Purcell's letter was published in January 1839, and the controversy arising out of it had scarcely closed when the Repeal Association was founded.

the amount of tithe recovered. And the men imprisoned were regarded as martyrs, and some who died were voted public funerals by the Precursor Society, and passed through an entire province followed by mourning crowds from the jail to the grave. A considerable party of English Reformers acknowledged the reasonableness of the Irish movement, and advocated the immediate or gradual disendowment of the Protestant Establishment; and successive Governments attempted to settle the question by some method of compromise. Ten bishoprics were suppressed and Church rates were relinquished as an instalment of the justice demanded. At this stage of the contest it is not surprising that to many in Ireland the abolition of tithe seemed certain and near. At length, in 1838, Lord Melbourne carried a measure into law which changed the tithe levied from the occupiers of land into a rent-charge, payable in the first instance by the landowners; that powerful class being rewarded for their acquiescence by an abatement of 25 per cent. of the original amount, and by being empowered to recover their advances from their tenants in the same manner as rent. To give tithe a new tenure under another name and to compel Catholic landowners to become tithe proctors for the Established Church was not a triumphant termination of a national struggle in which time and money and human life had been prodigally spent; and as O'Connell had acquiesced in this compromise he was held largely responsible for its odious conditions. Mr Sharman Crawford, a Protestant of liberal fortune and democratic opinions, who had lent his aid in Parliament and the Press to overthrow the tithe system, went to one of O'Connell's meetings in Dublin and charged him, face to face, with having sacrificed the interests of Ireland to the convenience of the Whig Government And Father Davern, a Tipperary priest of remarkable courage and ability, published a series of trenchant letters, holding him directly responsible for the disappointment of the national hopes. It may well be doubted whether tithe could have been abolished or the Church disestablished by any Parliamentary action in the state of English opinion at that period; but under a great disappointment men do not reason liberally, and many of his former adherents, especially among the Catholic clergy, to whom the Establishment was a constant insult and menace, were indisposed to embark with him in another undertaking so soon after the humiliating issue of what was known as the Tithe War.[1]

[1] See note at the end of the chapter on O'Connell, Sharman Crawford, and Father Davern.

The difficulties of his task will not be justly estimated if we leave out of account the fact that a new political association founded by O'Connell was a phenomenon which had long ceased to excite either lively hope or fear. Since the concession of Catholic Emancipation there had constantly been a popular organisation in Dublin for the redress of Irish grievances, holding its meetings at the Corn Exchange, the headquarters of the famous Catholic Association. At one time it was an anti-Whig, at another an anti-Tory Society; and although this constant watchfulness was in truth the necessary price of the few concessions won with immense difficulty from an unfriendly Parliament, it had not produced much visible result; and it was easy for ungenerous critics to represent that Irish grievances, like the stock scenes of a theatre, were kept in reserve, to be exhibited or withdrawn, shifted and replaced, with a view merely to sustain the interest of the audience and the profit of the management.

None of these impediments, however, was so embarrassing as one springing directly from O'Connell's alliance with the Whigs. The singleness of purpose which had honourably distinguished Catholic gentlemen in their contest for religious liberty had become impaired by the habit of receiving favours from the Government, and they were less willing than of old to consider exclusively the public interest. The test to which Christianity was subjected when, coming out of the catacombs and deserts, she found herself the guest of courts and the hostage of conquerors, was repeated on a smaller scale among a people who, having for five generations only known authority as an enemy, were at length admitted at times to sit at its feasts.

The new organisation which O'Connell proceeded to found took a shape which strengthened these objections and suspicions by seeming to exhibit a secret want of faith in his professed object. The Repeal Association proposed not merely to dissolve the Union, but to abolish tithe (which had just been re-established, with his own concurrence), to procure fixity of tenure for landholders, and, for the democracy, no less than four of the six points of the Charter demanded by the working classes in England,—extension of the suffrage, shorter Parliaments, no property qualification, and equal electoral districts. This programme was scarcely compatible, it was contended, with the design of bringing to a speedy end the legislative connection with England, or even with the design of uniting in one body the Irishmen who agreed in desiring such a result. It was certain there were national Conservatives who were not friendly to a low franchise or to equal electoral districts, and

national Protestants who would not consent to abolish tithe; and there were as certainly men agreeing with O'Connell on these points whom the abandonment of the Repeal contest half a dozen years before had rendered so sore and suspicious that they would be sure to hold aloof from an Association with such miscellaneous and conflicting purposes.

Outside his habitual supporters the nation was not in a frame of mind favourable to his appeal. In Ireland, every class of the community, except the great officers of the civil and ecclesiastical establishments, were poorer than the corresponding class in any country in Europe. It was a rare thing to meet with a family in the middle rank who were not struggling to keep up appearances; the landed gentry had been extravagant, and were paying the penalty in debt and embarrassment; professional incomes had been sinking year by year since the Union, and at this time the large class engaged in trade were disquieted by the occurrence of a commercial crisis. The Dublin merchants had once been eager politicians, they had thronged the ranks of the Volunteers of '82, who dictated a Constitution to Parliament; and of the Orange organisation, which dictated a policy to the Government since the Union. Merchants had been the most aspiring and independent section of the Catholic community during the struggle for religious liberty; commerce being the only pursuit in which Catholics had an open field. Up to the coming of O'Connell they had furnished all the efficient leaders, and some of them, like John Keogh, were men of large capacity and resources. But their sons and successors had seen agitation after agitation begin and end without commensurate results; and at this time a merchant would almost as soon have gone into the Insolvency Court as into a political association. The Protestant gentry, who considered the Union as the bulwark of the Established Church and of the land code framed in their interest, were scornfully hostile to any attempt to disturb it. Their fathers had resisted the Union in the name of the Protestant Constitution which they administered, but the rise of the Catholic people to political equality alarmed them for the monopolies which they still enjoyed, and they repudiated their hereditary opinions. The younger Catholic gentry, who in many instances had been educated in English schools, and who had just begun to taste official favours, regarded O'Connell as an instrument useful to secure seats in Parliament, and to squeeze patronage from the Castle, but unhappily a person of vulgar manners. They never felt secure that he would not outrage their timorous code of etiquette by unmeasured personal sarcasm on his opponents, or their sense of propriety by some

vehement complaint or demand on the part of the people which could not be sanctioned in good society. That a long-excluded class should be ambitious was natural; but in general they were only shabbily ambitious—eager to be magistrates and grand jurors, and to be remembered on festive occasions by the vice-regal aide-de-camp, when they might have aspired to possess and rule their native country. Their fathers had furnished few and timid recruits to the movement for Catholic Emancipation, and now there was not one conspicuous country gentleman, Catholic or Protestant, to be seen in the Corn Exchange. The Irish Bar had once been the nursery of statesmen and patriots; but since the Union its national spirit had gradually evaporated. During the Catholic struggle, to be anti-Catholic was supposed to imply peculiar devotion to the Empire, and national sentiments were a complete disqualification to professional promotion. Mr Sheil, Mr Woulfe, afterwards Chief Baron, and a few other barristers, had distinguished themselves in the Catholic Association; but since Emancipation they had all gradually withdrawn from O'Connell and allied themselves with the Whig party. Among his political associates in 1840 there were a few men who had been called to the Bar, and one or two who were practising barristers in a quite insignificant way; but the Four Courts were no better represented than the gentry or merchants. It would not be just to assume that the old comrades who had fallen away from O'Connell were all unfaithful to Irish interests. Very often, indeed, they were so, or became so in the end; but he had sometimes made it difficult for men of honour and spirit to remain his associates. He was impatient of counsellors who guarded their personal independence too jealously, and he was prone to the fault common among the strong and self-confident, of preferring agents to confederates.

This was the state of feeling among the people to whom O'Connell directly addressed himself. In England the feeling was widely different. From the period when he first became dangerous as a Catholic Leader he had been systematically abused by the anti-Catholic Press; but since the Irish members under his control became supporters of the Whig administration, party spirit had come to augment sectarian prejudice, and every public proceeding in which he was engaged was shamefully misrepresented. The O'Connell of English opinion at that time was a portrait as distorted in its lineaments and as smirched with the stains of slander and prejudice as the Oliver Cromwell of the Restoration, or the George Washington of English journalism during the war of Independence. He had given substantial help to more than one party

formed for the redress of wrongs in England or the Colonies, and was an acknowledged leader among the Parliamentary Radicals, but these public services were forgotten when he alarmed the national pride of Englishmen. No time or place, indeed, was deemed unsuitable for disparaging him; Lever, writing a story of Ireland before the Union; Lockhart, writing a biography of Scott; or Thackeray a book of Eastern Travel, contrived to gratify the taste that revelled in jibes at O'Connell. The newspapers had recourse to ruder missiles; his politics, according to these liberal critics, were simply a device to obtain money and to delude an ignorant and excitable people with false promises, that he might obtain it regularly and plentifully. The allusion was to an annual offering known as the O'Connell Tribute. This fund originated immediately after Catholic Emancipation in a desire to reward its most successful advocate and place him in a position to devote himself exclusively to Irish affairs. The first collection fell short of the necessary amount for this purpose, and it was determined to make the appeal periodically, and turn the tribute into an annuity. The fund was under the control of a skilful diplomate, who was paid by a percentage of the receipts, and it had been managed with great success.[1] Every year the most competent writer who could be induced to undertake the task made an appeal to the country on the merits and services of O'Connell; meetings were held in the Dublin parishes to set an example of liberality, and on a day fixed a collection was made in nearly every Catholic church and chapel in the island. At first all was spontaneous alacrity and zeal, but the tribute had now been nearly a decade in operation, and by this time private solicitation and public emulation were necessary to keep the stream flowing. O'Connell had undoubtedly given up the practice of a profession which yielded him a liberal income to watch over the interests of Ireland, and rather than abandon that duty he had refused the office of Master of the Rolls, proffered him by the Melbourne administration. But men who would have honoured him if the annuity were paid quarterly at the Treasury, reviled him because it was a free-will offering collected from the people without the intervention of the tax-gatherer. No doubt among his warmest supporters there were not a few who would have preferred a tribune who, like Brutus and Washington, served the people without pay or perquisites; and his power of usefulness would have been immensely increased had

[1] Patrick Vincent FitzPatrick, a man of wit, and a charming story-teller, who delighted Dublin dinner-parties and was never seen at a political meeting. The first collection, when only one was intended, reached nearly £60,000.

he added self-sacrifice to his other great qualities. But, on the whole, there was a disposition in Ireland to take a generous view of the case, to make allowance for a man long accustomed to dispense money freely, and to give the national leader the benefit of that sentiment of Edmund Burke, that "he who takes a fee for pleading the cause of distress against power, and manfully performs the duty he has assumed, receives an honourable recompense for a virtuous service." In England, however, where Pitt and Fox had been helped by contributions from their partisans, and where Cobden and Bright were soon to be so helped, it was treated as manifest prostitution, and he was habitually stigmatised as "a paid patriot" and a "Big Beggarman."[1] The new agitation was pronounced by the leading journals to be a device primarily for filling his pockets, and collaterally for embarrassing a party which disdained his assistance. Peace and prosperity, they affirmed, would bless Ireland if only the tribute were abandoned, but a hired agitator was as necessarily opposed to peace as a soldier of fortune. They pointed scornfully to the fact that there was an O'Connell Bank where he was governor, and an O'Connell Brewery to which his youngest son lent his name for a share of the profits, as evidence that he traded on his popularity. And they clamoured for a truce to public agitation as the one thing needful; such a truce at that time being another name for leaving scandalous abuses unexposed and unredressed. England doubtless believed him to be a sordid impostor, for it is a weakness of England to believe evil willingly of men whom she fears or dislikes. Here and there a public writer was courageous enough to suggest that this hypothesis was founded on an impossible theory of his life. From early manhood he had been constantly true to what he believed to be the interest of his country. For twenty years he led an agitation for religious liberty, till the Government of the Empire capitulated to the committee of the Catholic Association. He strode to a foremost place in a hostile House of Commons, and in the end set up and pulled down administrations according as they were friendly or unfriendly to Ireland; was it not reasonably probable—so they suggested—that he might be, not an impostor, but simply an intense Irishman, who shared the mistaken aims and unruly passions of his race? But this plea in abatement was drowned in a general chorus of reprobation; he was troublesome to England, and therefore plainly a scoundrel.

[1] The phrases were invented in Ireland by Frederick William Conway, a Whig journalist in the secret service and pay of the Government, but were immediately adopted and naturalised in England.

The means by which these impediments were all gradually overcome, by which the Irish people were united in a passionate desire for the revival of the Irish Constitution, by which a proposal received in the first instance with jeers in the Chamber of Commerce of Dublin, was made a subject of popular enthusiasm in Paris, New York, and Vienna, and finally the means by which the English people were taught that what they had to encounter was not the device of a demagogue, but the will of a nation—are worthy of being carefully studied.

The main factor was the prodigious energy of O'Connell. He was gifted with the patient, inflexible will before which difficulties disappear, and with the belief in himself which comes of battles won. After all that could be alleged by detractors, there remained the abnormal fact that in the eyes of the world he was the embodied voice and spirit of his country; and that on the narrow stage of a provincial capital he had raised himself, in her name, to be a European potentate, and to stand on a level with rulers and kings. The odds were doubtless formidable; but when he first became a Catholic leader he had faced odds still more disproportionate. He has been compared in that period to a Christian captive in the Colosseum, who saw, wherever his eyes were turned, the robes of authority and the arms of power, tier over tier, arrayed against him. But all that huge edifice of Protestant ascendancy, like the Flavian amphitheatre, had fallen into ruins; and fallen before assaults of which his own were not the least memorable. The organisation he had framed for this purpose had been servilely copied to carry Parliamentary Reform in England, and had essentially contributed to carry it; and he might well believe that it was good for another achievement in the hands of its inventor. Though the party which adhered to him was diminished in numbers, and more dangerously crippled by the desertion of its staff officers, he could at least count on it for unswerving obedience. Within its ranks he had long been a master as supreme as Calvin in Geneva, almost as supreme as Francia in Paraguay. In the last resource he was the sole embodiment of the popular confidence. In former agitations, whenever he had reason to distrust the fidelity of a colleague, or to fear his rivalry too acutely, he cashiered him without mercy, and the people invariably acquiesced. If a journal of his party offended him, it was promptly punished by public censure; and if it did not make its peace by submission, generally died under his displeasure or was driven to support itself by a disgraceful alliance with the Castle. Even bishops, commonly regarded by the people with a veneration which precluded criticism, lost their prestige if

they fell under the habitual censure of the Corn Exchange. Whoever is familiar with the controversies of that period must admit that, though he committed many errors and some grave injustice, he was in general in the right and his opponents in the wrong. The infatuation of the Irish people in maintaining their confidence in him almost unimpaired, through all changes of policy, has been made the subject of much vindictive rhetoric.[1] But it is difficult to suggest what better they could have done. They were slowly emerging from ignorance and incapacity deliberately created by law; they had not leisure or the requisite knowledge of facts to discriminate beween the right and wrong of individual controversies, but they knew they had got a great Tribune, who had delivered them from the servitude of ages, who was flesh of their flesh and bone of their bone, who loved what they loved and hated what they hated, and whom they must accept as nature and circumstances had moulded him, or not at all; and they did by instinct, what the most disciplined of the ancient or mediæval democracies would have done on policy and calculation—they conferred a dictatorship upon him, and maintained him in it with unwavering fidelity. But arbitrary power bestowed by a community upon a conspicuous citizen is a gift which is apt to be fatal to one or other of the contracting parties; it may be wise to grant it in extreme cases, but it can scarcely ever be accepted with impunity. The long enjoyment of supreme authority had undoubtedly made O'Connell unscrupulous in the exercise of it. In private life he was considerate of differences, and placable; but in public controversy, when he was contending for his opinions or his will, *coram populo*, he seldom hesitated to win an immediate victory at any cost to his opponent's reputation, or his own. He had undertaken to think for the whole nation, and those to whom thinking for themselves was a necessity found it a hard experiment to act with him. He dealt with difference of opinion, as long as it made no show of resistance, with a certain humorous forbearance, free from malignity; but if it became dangerous, he broke into a cold, scornful rage, which was likened to the boiling surge of a northern sea. This was a habit highly unfavourable to the growth of individual capacity. Obedience was a virtue which covered many shortcomings in his eyes; and as there is no virtue easier to simulate, it had often an alarming collection of shortcomings to cover.

A great master in any career ordinarily founds a school of students

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[1] Lord Brougham's "Statesmen of the Time of George III.;" the Tory Press of 1842-3, *passim*.

qualified and proud to carry out his designs; he is certain to do so if he has been helpful and considerate with young men; but at this time O'Connell was without one associate possessing acknowledged weight of character, or solidity of judgment or enthusiasm of conviction. Of his ordinary political retinue, some were painfully deficient in capacity and education, and others whom he had raised to Parliament were reputed to have turned their public functions to the basest uses. For this is the inevitable penalty of the statesman or leader who prefers courtiers and lackeys to counsellors and peers.

Marvellous as were O'Connell's energy and resources, they were not sufficient to move the mass of prejudice and dumb indifference which confronted him; and they would have failed to move it in the end without the help of agencies which hitherto he had never employed and hardly understood. Of the nation which he proposed to unite in a common purpose, the socially better class would scarcely give his proposal a patient hearing. The bulk of the people, upon whom alone he could count, were gifted with a generosity which shrank before no sacrifice; but they were ill equipped for such an enterprise as he had in view. Their courage was not fortified by knowledge or by that pride of race which feeds the self-respect of nations. They had been deprived, by deliberate design, not only of all liberal culture, but of the very instrumental parts of education. The industrial classes were unable to pay school fees out of wages often too small to buy daily meals of potatoes and salt; and in this class the Catholics were twenty to one. The public schools provided for them by the State, between the Union and the Reformed Parliament, were schools where the Protestant Catechism, expounded by a Protestant schoolmaster and interpolated with lectures on the errors of Popery, was part of the daily discipline. To attend these schools was naturally considered infamous by the class for whom they were designed. The Catholic schools established by private enterprise were such as may be imagined among a people who had lost their lands and their churches, their convents and their colleges; who were long prohibited from buying or inheriting freeholds, or practising the liberal professions, who were restricted in their commercial pursuits, and were slowly recovering from a vigilant and subtle persecution, of which these were but the vulgar evidences. They were necessarily schools without adequate books, or teachers, or system, or discipline. The generation which had grown up under O'Connell had got a political training which in some degree compensated for their want of culture and knowledge. In the Catholic struggle they learned

concert, self-reliance, the necessity of making mutual concessions, and the invaluable secret to a suffering people—the secret of their own power. But they had been taught for the most part as men were taught before the invention of printing. When the Catholic Association began to address Ireland, newspapers were dear and scarce, and never penetrated lower than the middle class. The day's wages of a labouring man would barely buy a single copy. Such as existed on the popular side at that time contained little beyond the speeches and letters of O'Connell and Shiel, and faint echoes of them sent back from provincial meetings. The majority of the Celtic race could not read or write; and the minority who could read and write possessed, as we shall presently see, scarce one of the intellectual agencies which in free countries help to elevate and consolidate national opinion and make it a powerful weapon.

That under such conditions it was possible to raise the question of repealing the Union into the region of practical politics—the region where a public controversy excites lively hopes and fears, and arrays supporters and adversaries in uncertain conflict—might well seem impossible.

NOTE ON CHAPTER I.

O'Connell, Sharman Crawford, and Father Davern.

O'Connell's reception of Sharman Crawford at the Dublin meeting was so unfriendly as to prevent co-operation between them afterwards when co-operation would have produced important public results. When Crawford was addressing himself, in a somewhat hard and formal manner, to the question whether the substitution of rent-charge for tithe ought to have been accepted on behalf of Ireland, O'Connell kept interposing grotesque questions such as: "What brought you here, Sharman, my jewel?" "What are you after, Crawford, my man?" and bantering comments on his white waistcoat. We shall have occasion to see how bitterly this somewhat clumsy pleasantry was afterwards resented.

A single specimen will sufficiently indicate the character and spirit of Father Davern's letters:—"On the tithe question the people of Ireland had already chosen their own remedy—*they wanted no legislation—sought for no interference*—they were prepared to suffer all, to endure all, *but to pay nothing*. A clear stage and no favour between them and the parson was all they looked for; they had it if they were let alone, and they were on the very brink of complete success if the blight of Whig legislation and internal delusions had not fallen upon their councils. . . . . The Bill was again and again and a third time thrown out, until at length, when the country became weary of the vain

contention, the *appropriation clause*—against which the Lords objected, but which was the only part of the measure that tempted or deluded the people to tolerate it at all—was unceremoniously excluded. Yes, Sir, Lord John Russell—your immaculate and justice-loving Lord John—ventured to turn into the House a naked Bill of Securities, including payment of arrears to the Protestant clergy, which gave them a charge on the first estate, and made the landlords their proctors, at a time when seven millions of people are crying out for abolition—which perpetuated the mockery of churches without congregations, and endowments without services, amidst a people so poor that the winds and the rains of winter visited them as they knelt crowded in their lowly houses of worship—which was equally destructive to the interests of landlord and tenant, rendering the one liable to have a receiver placed over his property within thirty days after the tithe falls due, and the other to distress and ejectment if he did not enable him to pay, which finally made complaint vain and resistance almost impossible. This Bill, Sir, 'worse than ever was imposed by Mahommedan sword on Grecian vassals,' passed through both Houses of Parliament, and was supported by Daniel O'Connell, and a great majority of the Liberal Irish representatives. . . . . Oh, Sir, reflect for one moment! Was it for the discharge of arrears which never could be recovered, or for a reduction of 25 per cent., our ancestors resisted this unhallowed tax through sufferings and danger, or that the widow at Rathcormac sold the blood of her son?"—(Letter of Rev. P. O. B. Davern to Daniel O'Connell, Esq., M.P.)

The movement against tithe began in 1830. In 1831 a dozen men were shot and a score wounded by the police at Newtownbarry. Next year eleven policemen were killed by the people at Carrickshock. In 1833 Church rates and the ten bishoprics were abolished. In 1834 a new massacre of the people took place at Rathcormac. In 1838 the Act converting tithe into rent-charge became law. It is claimed for Patrick Lalor, of Tinakill, afterwards member of Parliament for the Queen's County (and of whose son, James Finton Lalor, there is much to be said later), that he commenced and organised this movement.

CHAPTER II.

HOW THE MOVEMENT FARED, AND WHAT O'CONNELL TAUGHT.

O'Connell opened his Association on Burgh Quay, and addressed himself week after week to an humble and scanty audience with unfailing punctuality. The audience he hoped to win was not collected on the coal quays, but scattered through the presbyteries, workshops, and farmhouses of the island; and in his singular career there is nothing more notable than the patience with which this man, who had long passed his grand climacteric, applied himself to the task as if he had a lifetime to work it out. The few recruits fit for political service who presented themselves were turned to good account. A series of reports on separate branches of the national question was published from time to time, bearing the name O'Connell on the title-page, and no doubt projected by him, but, like Mirabeau's speeches, often the work of industrious journeymen. They were weighty with facts; but facts ill digested and unskilfully applied, and which only struck the public ear when they reappeared, as the more significant ones were sure to do, in his speeches. A native Parliament—such was his thesis—had become manifestly necessary, because the imperial system had failed to answer any of the higher purposes of Government. It had not brought Ireland prosperity, it had not even secured for her honest treatment in the transactions arising out of the national partnership. Trade and Commerce, which were prosperous in 1800, were now ruined. Ireland was growing annually poorer, till she had reached a lower level than any country in Europe, and yet she was loaded with an inordinate proportion of the public debt. Parliamentary promises of relief had been ostentatiously made and cynically broken; and, notwithstanding the Union upon paper, there was still in practice one law for England and another and quite different law for "that part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland called Ireland — propositions which, if well founded, were surely as weighty and stringent as any that ever engaged the diplomacy or appealed to the *ultima ratio* of neighbouring States.

Some summary of the facts O'Connell relied on can scarcely be dispensed with by readers who would understand the transactions which followed. It may serve, moreover, to allay a doubt which has long perplexed English writers, whether Ireland, once Catholic Emancipation was granted, ought not to have acknowledged thankfully that the Promised Land was reached, and refrained from agitation for ever after.

There is no case so trite and unimpressive as a case which no one disputes, and this was O'Connell's first difficulty. To tell Ireland that she had suffered by the Union was like telling Bruges or Venice that her glory has departed. Everyone who listened to him knew that the ancient seat of industry in the Liberties was now a pauper warren, that the stately edifices erected by an Irish Parliament for the necessities of international commerce were now the offices of tax-gatherers, that the palaces of the resident nobility had become museums and mendicities, and the Woollen Hall, from which the produce of five thousand looms was once circulated, a poorhouse crowded with weavers without work; and every one who read his speeches could probably cite some local experience of the same character. But the trained politician knew how to draw from the familiar facts the fundamental principles which underlay them. In a partnership there are certain essential conditions; conditions which cannot be disputed—there ought to be mutual benefit; the business ought to be conducted fairly; and all engagements ought to be strictly carried out; otherwise the partnership must cease. But were there mutual advantages in the partnership between England and Ireland? His illustrations of this point, after they have passed under a sort of hydraulic pressure, may still be read with much profit.

The Union was an advantageous compact for one of the parties. England found a market for her fabrics, a recruiting field for her army, a partner in her public burthens, and by making absenteeism a necessity among the wealthy classes who were members of the Houses of Parliament, and the train who followed them, she drew from Ireland an annual tribute of five or six millions of rent. She enjoyed a monopoly of the public patronage: the chief offices paid by Irish taxes were filled by English functionaries. But for the other partner it was a disastrous compact. Before the Union Ireland was the seat of flourishing woollen and silk manufactories. The woollen trade had taken root prior to the Revolution of 1688, but on the demand of the English Parliament that he would suppress this dangerous rivalry, the Deliverer had so effectually discouraged it, though it was in the hands of Protestants, that it nearly disappeared. A hundred years later, when Grattan established legislative independence, the trade sprang up under the care of a free Parliament, and at the period of the Union the cloth loom was at work in Dublin, Kilkenny, Limerick, Carrick-on-Suir, Roscrea, and a number of smaller towns. The population of Ireland was then only four millions, of

whom one hundred and fifty thousand persons were employed in silk and woollen manufacture. In 1841 the population was between eight and nine millions, but instead of the number of artisans in these trades having increased to three hundred thousand, they had shrunk to a mere handful. The mills in the provincial towns were all closed; in Dublin, where ninety master manufacturers had given employment to five thousand artisans, the number of manufacturers had diminished to twelve, the workmen were under seven hundred. The fate of the remainder, as far as they survived, might be learned from the annual reports of the Mendicity Society; some were breaking stones for ninepence a day, some were starving for want of this miserable resource. "I found in Luke's Parish" (such was the language of a benevolent doctor who reported on the condition of the Dublin artisans at this time) "sixty-five houses, containing one thousand seven hundred and sixty-three inhabitants, nearly twenty-eight persons in each on an average, among the entire of whom scarcely fifty blankets could be found."

The partnership had manifestly worked ill for Ireland; but it was necessary to inquire how this result arose. Had the conditions been fairly carried out? Not so: the poorer country was loaded with an inordinate share of the public burden. The Irish Parliament, servile in other respects, had kept a guard on the public purse; and at the commencement of the French War their national debt amounted to only two millions and a quarter, while the debt of England amounted to close upon two hundred and forty millions. By political legerdemain Ireland was deprived of this advantage; an Irish debt was created by an undue military expenditure in her name during the war, by the creation of a pension list on which English courtesans and favourites, spies and jobbers, were silently quartered by royal authority, and by the trick of charging as Irish national expenditure the money employed by English statesmen to purchase votes in favour of the Union. In subsequent financial arrangements she suffered the fate of men and nations who entrust their interests to strangers; since Waterloo taxes had been remitted in England to the amount of forty millions, while in Ireland the remission amounted to little more than one million.

If these facts were alleged against an individual, he must disprove them under penalty of becoming infamous; and the aggregation of individuals called a State has no dispensation from the laws of honour and morality. The method by which these iniquities were sheltered from enquiry aggravated the original offence.

To protect and continue this system it was necessary to diminish the political power of Ireland, and it was diminished with a profligate indifference to justice. England had obtained parliamentary reform and so had Ireland; but mark the contrast. It was not enough that Parliament sat in England, under the spell of English influence and opinion, but it was deliberately packed with an unfair English majority. The county of Galway had a larger population than Worcestershire; but Worcestershire had four members and Galway only two. The Protestant county of Down was no better treated than the Catholic county of Galway; it had a larger population than Northamptonshire, but only half the number of members. What was the moral? If these English counties were in Ireland, they would

have but two members; they were in England, and had four. But this was not all; the county of Cork had nearly as large a population as the principality of Wales; Wales had twenty-eight representatives and Cork had two. So with boroughs: Totnes and Honiton, Harwick and Monmouth, with a population in each case under five thousand, and sometimes a long way under it, had two members each; while Bandon and Athlone, Dundalk and Kilkenny, with an average population above ten thousand, had but one member each. The same deliberate injustice ran uniformly through the whole scheme. Scotland by the Reform Act got an increase of members in the ratio of one to five of her existing representatives, Wales got one to six, Ireland only one to twenty.

There were, it must be confessed, many Irishmen who insisted that justice might be obtained from the English Parliament; but they were persons with short memories. What had happened only six years before? In 1834 the House of Commons by a signal majority refused to consider the Repeal question; but accompanied this refusal by a pledge to "apply their best attention to the removal of all just causes of complaint, and to the promotion of all well-considered measures of improvement for the benefit of Ireland." This resolution was communicated to the Lords, who concurred in it, and joined in an address to the King reiterating the pledge. How had this pledge been fulfilled? The Irish Corporations were exclusively in the hands of Protestants; the bulk of the nation had no more share in them than in the Corporations of London or Amsterdam. They were reeking with corruption; a royal commission reported that in every instance they had plundered the public estate granted for their endowment; yet these dishonest Corporations were maintained in full authority, although in England and Scotland a thorough municipal reform had been effected. "England"—exclaimed O'Connell, who understood the effect of iteration in catching the popular ear—"England has for several years enjoyed reformed Corporations; Scotland has for several years enjoyed reformed Corporations; but Ireland, where in lieu of a native Parliament, all just causes of complaint were to be promptly removed, is contemptuously refused corporate reform."

The summing-up of the case might furnish the preamble of as fierce a declaration of wrongs as an injured people ever made the herald of war.

The supreme test of any law is whether it promotes the happiness of the people. The Union had ruined merchants, traders, and artisans; and the peasantry fared no better than the skilled workman. The Poor Law Commissioners computed the number of agricultural labourers to be over a million, and ascertained that one-half of these were out of employment for thirty weeks in the year. "A fact" (says Thomas Carlyle afterwards[1]) "perhaps the most eloquent that ever was written down in any language at any date of the world's history." These men with half employment had depending on their labour for daily bread more than a million and a half of women, children, and other helpless persons. The Poor Law reports

[1] "Chartism," by Thomas Carlyle.

describe their methods of obtaining sustenance in terms that seemed borrowed from the horrors of some mediæval siege. In Galway, during the summer, the peasantry lived on cabbages and green herbs, with a few potatoes. In some parts of the county of Mayo, when the potatoes were exhausted, "they bled their cattle and ate the boiled blood, sometimes mixed with meal, but often without it." This was in Connaught, where the distress was greatest; in Munster destitution was not so common as in Connaught, but it was more common than in any other part of the civilised world.

Here were facts of weight and significance; and O'Connell was gifted beyond most men with the power of employing them effectively. Yet the movement made no visible progress. His facts were not disputed, and even Unionists of liberal disposition were ready to admit that though it might be necessary to retain Ireland in the partnership with or without her consent, it ought not to be necessary to cheat her in the partnership accounts; but the proposed remedy did not gain adherents.

The audience in the Corn Exchange continued to be scanty. The periodical meetings of a political body, where the business was to receive subscriptions and the debate was in effect a monologue, were necessarily monotonous: and Dublin had been familiar for more than twenty years with a periodical meeting on Burgh Quay. For strangers the presence of O'Connell was always an attraction; but his great powers were now rarely employed. His speech was commonly a review of the miscellaneous proceedings in Parliament and elsewhere, full of practical sense indeed, sometimes relieved by happy touches of humour, but often tame and even tedious. On special occasions, when some new wrong was to be denounced, when a public right had been called in question and needed to be vindicated, or when he was unfairly assailed by an opponent worthy of an answer, the born orator awoke. The mobile face, gleaming with humour or blazing in wrath, the well-set head and iron jaw, the towering figure and voice of leonine compass, but capable of all modulations in the gamut of passion or persuasion, furnished a picture never to be forgotten. His tones were melody; and the gift is not a common one among orators reared amid the uncertain winters of the West. Grattan's voice was weak and artificial, Curran never quite overcame the natural impediment which fixed on the boy the nickname of "stuttering Jack," Shiel's falsetto was likened to the noise of a rusty saw, and in later times Meagher's tones were passionate and thrilling but never rich or flexible; but the music of O'Connell's voice associated itself with every mood of his mind, as if it

were created for that special purpose alone. His best mood was close vigorous logic and scathing indignation. He sometimes uttered short fierce sentences of concentrated passion which fell on the popular ear like a tocsin; but he was not often in his best mood. He insisted that it was necessary to repeat the same ideas, and even the same catchwords, again and again, with a total disregard to the immediate effect on the freshness or symmetry of his speech, in order to plant them in the public mind. On some notable success he had announced the date of the event as "a great day for Ireland," but the phrase was repeated so often on smaller occasions that great days became too numerous for the most patriotic calendar; and he had a set speech ready for occasions when there was nothing particular to be said, describing the natural resources and picturesque scenery of Ireland, the hundredth repetition of which was a trial to human patience.

For more than a year there came no decisive answer to his appeals. The Association met week by week in the old historic hall, but it was regarded without hope, and with but limited confidence in the country; and the Repeal Rent, a contribution which was the pulse of popular sympathy for O'Connell, as the funds are the pulse of public confidence in the State, was miserably low. The amount contributed during the year scarcely exceeded the sum received in a single week at a later period. In the face of these discouragements he steadily pursued his task, and more than fifty times took up the theme anew. He described the shameful methods by which the Union had been carried; the opposition with which it was encountered by the best men in Ireland, and the subsequent calamities which had justified their resistance; and finally he proceeded to develop to his scanty audience a scheme for the reconstruction of the Irish Parliament on the basis of the present population. But the people continued apathetic; and the middle class stood aside, and in private made a jest of his reconstructed Parliament. His facts were not contested, but they were already familiar to his audience, and they created no fermentation. They were facts eminently fit to be employed in a Parliamentary contest; but except those painting the condition of the industrious people which familiarity had robbed of half their horror, scarce facts fit to raise a nation to the height of patriotic passion by which revolutions are accomplished. It is not in defence of their material interests, still less to adjust an account of profit and loss, that a sympathetic people make supreme efforts.

The gifts which enabled O'Connell to face these disheartening impediments were the gifts to which all the success of his past career

was attributable. He joined steadfast industry to a capacity with which it is seldom united except in intellects of the first order—the capacity for projecting. He could plan large designs boldly, and work out the details of his plan as if he possessed no other faculty but diligence. He had boundless self-reliance. When he began to take a part in Catholic affairs more than a generation earlier, he exhibited an intrepidity which at that time seemed prodigious in one of his class and race. A barrister practising in Courts which were at once hostile and practically irresponsible, and one of the earliest Catholics since the fall of Limerick who had entered them in that character, he comported himself as if the agents of Protestant Ascendancy were not his born masters. It is probable that his foreign education contributed as much as his native vigour to kindle this civic courage. He had lived in countries where men of his creed were the rulers, and he did not consider the religion of the State a diploma of rank; he had witnessed gorgeous ceremonials, and he no longer regarded with inordinate awe the mere trappings of power. Nothing, perhaps, established his authority among the Catholics in the earlier days so much as this demeanour. Little more than a quarter of a century earlier a Catholic priest, grossly outraged by a Protestant peer, could find no barrister bold enough to hold a brief in his behalf except a still obscure and briefless junior named Philpot Curran. It was not strange that the subject race looked up with wonder and veneration to an advocate of their own blood, who stood like a visible Providence between them and their oppressors. For the first time in living memory they began to believe that there was a law to which they could have recourse against injustice and which, within certain limits, would protect them. It was a great service to the State to create such a belief, but it was not the most beneficial result of his courage.

To see the young Catholic lawyer not only hold his own fearlessly with the Bench, but subject officials to a sharp censorship, to see him ready to defend the weak and poor, and always hopeful and confident of final success for a just cause, were important examples to a people struggling back into the atmosphere of liberty; and in old age the consciousness of having done this work was still an inspiration. He was patient, because a long experience of life taught him how difficulties disappear and opinions change, and he was of so vigorous a constitution that no labour disheartened him. He was always at his post, and as ready for work as for a feast. He lived his life indeed in public, the Parliamentary recess being occupied with meetings and dinners of

charitable societies, relieved only by a month or two with his beagles at Darrynane. He was not easily ruffled and not easily bored, and his very deficiencies rendered him in some respects fitter for his work. The robust, practical man found tolerable a life wholly wanting in the privacy and seclusion without which a man of speculative genius could no more have existed than without food or air. He possessed in an eminent degree an art indispensable in his position—the art of conciliation. In society and in the transaction of business his manners were cheerful and engaging; and notwithstanding his long enjoyment of supreme power, he was tolerant of difference of opinion in council or in private—when it was not offensively maintained.

His person and countenance were still well suited to enforce his will. They expressed authority and a certain massive dignity. His career as *Nisi Prius* lawyer, however, rather than his career as a patriot, moulded the lines of his face, in which vigilance and acuteness were the prevailing expression. And first and last his most notable successes were those which only a lawyer could have won. During the long Catholic struggle he was known to the people as "the Counsellor," as Swift has been known as "the Dean," and as Wellington was known as "the Duke." After Emancipation, and even before the victory was sanctioned by law, a practice began of speaking of him as "the Liberator," but it never took root in the popular speech like the early and significant title, which implied not merely one learned in the law, but the man upon whose counsel the poor and oppressed might rely. It is curious that the first relaxation of the penal laws against Irish Catholics, which came of the panic created in Europe by the French Revolution, should have determined the career of the man who was destined to give them the final stroke. "The son of a gentleman farmer" (to use his own language), living in a wild and primitive district where English authority was held in slight reverence, there was no choice for a vigorous young Catholic, full of impatient strength, between entering the army of some Continental State and degenerating into an adventurous smuggler, or perhaps an outlaw leader in his native mountains. But when he was barely on the threshold of manhood the Bar was opened to Catholics, and he entered on a career in which he was destined to win a splendid success. He was a pure Celt, but his life had been distinguished by qualities which their detractors deny to the Celt—patience, steadfastness of purpose, and complete mastery of his feelings. He was perhaps rash by temperament, but he was certainly prudent by discipline. His contest with a cruel faction armed with all the resources of power had taught him

caution, and even cunning, for cunning is the common weapon of the oppressed.

These legitimate resources of a powerful and disciplined intellect he sometimes supplemented by agencies which he might better have left to the feeble. He flattered his adherents in mass and in detail, and often with a grossness which savoured of secret contempt. Public thanks—the just reward of public services—were distributed indiscriminately, and had a tendency to degenerate into what in Ireland is called "blarney." There was a story—caricatured, of course, but substantially true—of O'Connell proposing a country gentleman to be a member of one of his Associations in terms like these: "I have the distinguished honour and satisfaction of moving that we enrol among our members my esteemed friend, the worthy and patriotic Mr"—(*sotto voce* to the secretary, "What's his name, Ray?"). Among the imitators of O'Connell this practice ran, of course, to seed. In the Association proceedings at this time there is a "Travelling Report" of one of its officers commencing in these terms:

"On Tuesday last I proceeded to ———, according to arrangement. I waited on our esteemed friend Mr ———, by whom I was introduced to that most excellent patriot and venerated dignitary, the Very Reverend ———; upon consultation, however, finding the public mind involved in the deepest sorrow by the death of that truly illustrious Irishman," etc.

After the Association had been a year in existence, the Whigs, who had lost control of the House of Commons, appealed to the constituencies by a dissolution.[1] The measure of O'Connell's success was now brought to a practical test, and the result was a profound and complete failure. Nine years before, the popular constituencies had elected forty Repealers, and set aside peremptorily the most distinguished Whigs who refused the national pledge. Now, among the new members there was not a single recruit to the national party. A few of the existing members professed themselves Repealers, but the number fell short of a dozen, and this small group included four members of his own family—his colleague in the county Cork, and Messrs Dillon Browne and Somers, who had already brought reproach on the name of "Irish member," and who, it may be feared, would have professed themselves Mormons rather than be excluded from Bellamy's and the smoking-room of the House of Commons. His youngest son was defeated in Carlow, the county which had accepted a London tradesman at his hands a few

[1] The dissolution took place on the 23rd of June 1841.

years before. The boroughs most susceptible of popular control were relinquished without contest to the Whigs. Clonmel elected the Irish Attorney-General, Dungarvan the Judge Advocate-General, Drogheda a Chief Secretary *in petto*, and Dundalk his future Under Secretary. The county of Kildare continued its support to Mr More O'Farrell, a Catholic squire, who was Secretary of the Treasury. O'Connell himself lost his seat for Dublin. Dublin was hard to win, the Irish Reform Act having left the roll of electors crowded with pauper "freemen" created by the exclusive Corporation, and loaded the freeholders with an unfair burthen of taxes; but whenever the popular passion rose high these difficulties were overcome: on this occasion they were not overcome. To exclude him from Parliament was impossible; two counties immediately elected him; but the significant fact of his defeat in Dublin remained. The city which had the greatest interest in the proposed change—such was the exulting language of his enemies—after more than fifty meetings had been held in its midst, refused to sanction his scheme.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST NOTABLE RECRUITS.

At the period of its greatest depression Repeal obtained its first important recruits. Their value was not of that sort which impresses the vulgar imagination; they were not men of rank or fortune, or of historic name, which in Ireland sometimes counts for more than rank or fortune. But they brought to the organisation an element without which, notwithstanding the prodigious vigour and resources of its founder, it would surely have perished. Half a dozen young men, mostly barristers or law students, and half of them Protestants, silently joined the Association. The barristers, only recently called, had no professional standing or business; but they were young, full of hope, of unstained reputation, and manifestly disinterested, for they were cutting themselves off from the source of favour and promotion. For a time they took little part in the weekly meetings; but they worked on committees, and began to speak to the people in unaccustomed tones in its official correspondence and through the Press. Nobody outside a narrow circle had ever heard their names; it became understood, however, by persons who concerned themselves with the subject that the Repeal movement had at last obtained volunteers who, whatever else they might be, were certainly not of the ordinary camp followers of O'Connell. The most notable of them were Thomas Osborne Davis and John Blake Dillon.

In the autumn of 1841 I first met John Dillon. Eighteen months earlier the editor of the *Morning Register*, a Dublin daily paper which had been the organ of the Catholic Association, and in later years had obtained a reputation for statistics and exact knowledge not of the liveliest sort, suddenly sailed for the Cape of Good Hope;[1] and at the same time I, who was sub-editor, went to conduct a journal in Belfast. On my first return visit to town I found the editorship of the *Register* in commision, and its readers in ecstasies of astonishment, finding their

[1] This editor was Mr Hugh Lynar, afterwards an official in the Cape Colony. He emigrated with his cousin, Mr William Porter, who went out as Attorney-General.

usual solid entertainment, in which Poor Laws and the Public debt were standing dishes, and where the Castle was treated with suspicious deference, suddenly replaced by speculations on the revival of Protestant nationality, historical parallels from classic and mediæval history, and even essays on the agencies and conditions of guerilla warfare. Two young barristers, I was told, fresh from college, and strongly suspected by veteran gentlemen of the Press to be slightly crazed, had got hold of Alderman Staunton's paper, and were playing pranks with it never before seen out of a pantomime. Two or three days later I met Dillon at the *Register* office, sitting in my relinquished chair. The sweet gravity of his countenance and the simple stately grace of his tall figure struck me at once. His dress was careless and his carriage had not then acquired the ease and firmness which afterwards became so natural that they seemed born with him; but he was a man whom a casual observer could scarcely overlook. Next day I met Davis in the rooms of the Repeal Association. At first sight he seemed to me somewhat arrogant and dogmatic, as men much in earnest are apt to look, but after a little the beaming earnestness of his face and the depth and piercing *timbre* of his voice in conversation mitigated my first impression. It was only afterwards that I knew him for what he truly was, the most modest and unselfish of men as well as the greatest and best of his generation. Dr Gray, who had recently become a proprietor of the other daily paper in the popular interest (the *Freeman's Journal*) was also present, looking preternaturally young for his position, and overflowing with gay activity.[1] I had no opportunity of private conversation with any of them, but I returned to Belfast persuaded that these young men represented a power which might produce signal results; a power new in modern Irish politics, for it was one which O'Connell had evoked as the "young blood of Ireland," but rarely trusted or employed. Half a year later, during a second visit to town to keep terms as a law student, I met Dillon in the Hall of the Four Courts; he made me acquainted with Davis, and as we were pleased with each other he proposed that we should walk away together to some place fitter for frank conversation. The young barristers put off their gowns, and we strolled into the neighbouring Phœnix Park. I learned that they had abandoned the *Morning Register*. The attempt to put new wine into a damaged utensil of that description had of course failed, and the venerable journal had returned to unmitigated facts and figures. After a long

[1] Dr Gray, who was born in 1815, was then twenty-six, and looked barely twenty years of age.

conversation on the prospects of the country we sat down under a noble elm within view of the Park gate leading to the city, and there I proposed to my new friends a project which had been often in my mind from the first time I met them—the establishment of a weekly newspaper which we three should own and write. They listened eagerly to the proposal, but they had no money to spare, and were unwilling to accept any responsibility which might involve them in debt. I was able to find capital to a moderate extent, and I solved the difficulty by undertaking to become sole proprietor if they aided me in the management, and in this arrangement they gladly concurred. I had intended to name the paper *The National*, from sympathy with the Paris journal of that name; but Davis objected that the use of an adjective for such a purpose was contrary to the analogies of the English language. I cited the *Constitutional*, recently defunct,[1] but this exception was not an enticing one, and after running over titles suggested by civil and military vigilance, such as the *Tribune*, the *Statesman*, the *Sentinel*, the *Banner*, and the like, he reverted to the first suggestion, and proposed as an amendment the happy and significant name of *The Nation*. We desired to make Ireland a nation, and the name would be a fitting prelude to the attempt. Before separating, we agreed to enlist contributors among our friends, and to publish with the prospectus a list of the writers as a guarantee of moral responsibility for what we taught. John Cornelius O'Callaghan, who had already begun to work a vein of historical investigation, which he has since successfully developed—the career of Irish soldiers at home and abroad—joined Davis; Dillon enlisted two of his fellow-students as occasional contributors, whose names were not permitted to appear in the prospectus.[2] Clarence Mangan, beginning to be known as the author of racy translations in the *Dublin University Magazine*, and O'Neil Daunt, formerly member for Mallow, and for a time private secretary to O'Connell, promised me their assistance. Mr Daunt afterwards brought in John O'Connell, who, as the favourite son of the national leader, was counted an important accession—for the prospectus at any rate; but on the remonstrance of some of the existing journalists, who considered themselves injured by the publication of his name in that character, he separated from us before the issue of the first number, and only returned when to be a writer in *The Nation* had become a distinction worth coveting.

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[1] The *Constitutional* was the London journal in which Thackeray lost much time and money.

[2] John O'Hagan and John E. Pigot.

The founders of the new journal were all under thirty years of age at that time; Davis twenty-eight, Dillon twenty-seven, and their colleague twenty-six; and it was afterwards noted as a fortunate circumstance for a journal whose primary aim was to represent the entire Irish people that we were born in different provinces—Munster, Connaught, and Ulster—and were all familiar from long residence with Leinster. The editorship was assigned to me as the most experienced in journalism, for I spent the interval between my twentieth and six-and-twentieth year in newspaper offices, and they had but quite recently stained their fingers with printer's ink. But Davis was our true leader. Not only had nature endowed him more liberally, but he loved labour better, and his mind had traversed regions of thought and wrestled with problems still unfamiliar to his confederates.

As these young men were destined to play a remarkable part, the reader will desire to be able to form some picture of them as they were at that time. Davis was a man of middle stature, strongly but not coarsely built, with a complexion to which habitual exercise, for he was a great walker, and habitual temperance gave a healthy glow. A broad brow and strong jaw stamped his face with a character of power, but except when it was lighted by thought or feeling it was plain and even rugged. His carriage was not good; a peculiar habit of leaning towards you in familiar conversation, arising from the eagerness of his nature, gave him the appearance of a stoop, and he dressed and walked as carelessly as a student is apt to do. But his glance was frank and direct as a sunbeam, he had a cordial and winning laugh, the prevailing expression of his face was open and genial, and his voice had tones of sympathy which went straight to the heart. "He was at that time," says one of his early friends, Mr Maddyn,[1] speaking of a period a couple of years earlier than the establishment of *The Nation*, "as delightful a young man as it was possible to meet with in any country. He was much more joyous than when he became immersed in practical politics. His good spirits did not seem, however, so much the consequence of youth and health as of his moral nature. His cheerfulness was less the result of temperament than of his sanguine philosophy and of his wholesome, happy views of life. The sources of enjoyment were abundant to a man of his large faculties highly cultivated, possessing withal a body which supplied him with vigour and energy."

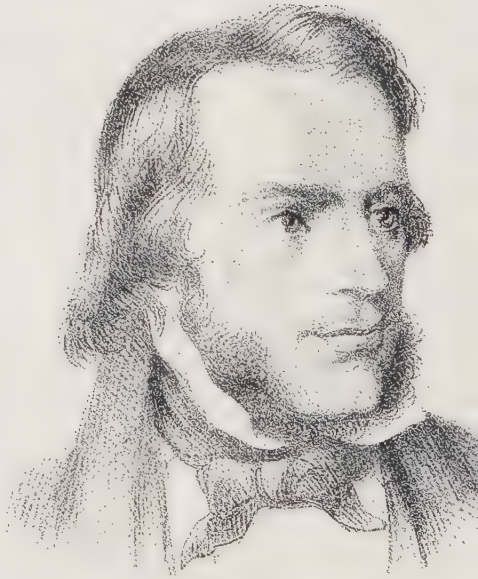
Davis was born in Mallow, the traditional rendezvous of a gay enjoy-

[1] Private letter *penes me* from Daniel Owen Maddyn, author of the "Age of Pitt and Fox," "Chiefs of Parties," "Ireland and its Rulers," etc.

From a portrait by
HENRY MACMANUS, R.H.A.

1843.

From a drawing by
SIR FREDERICK BURTON, R.A.



1845.

Thomas Davis.

ing gentry, caricatured in song as the "Rakes of Mallow," and the centre of some of the most notable transactions, and of the finest scenery in Munster. The history of the country was written there "in chronicles of clay and stone." His father, a military surgeon, married a lady who inherited old Irish blood, both of the Norman and Celtic stock, and after her husband's death she made her home in her native county. Davis never made any pretensions to birth, but he was entitled to claim a pedigree connecting him with memorable English names. He was, genealogists affirm, a man of old and honourable descent, both on the maternal and paternal side. His mother's family was a branch of the Atkins of Firville, in the County Cork, sharing also the blood of the O'Sullivans. His great-grandfather, Sir Jonathan Atkins, of Givensdale, in Yorkshire, was Governor of Guernsey in the seventeenth century, and left, by his first wife, Mary, daughter of Sir Richard Howard, of Neworth Castle, Cumberland, the sister of the first Earl of Carlisle, three sons, the second of whom settled at Fountainville, County Cork, and was the maternal ancestor of Davis. His father, James Thomas Davis, a surgeon in the Royal Artilery, and Acting Deputy-Inspector of Hospitals in the Peninsula, the representative of a Buckinghamshire family originally from Wales, died at Exeter in 1814. His mother and her family, consisting at the time of two sons and a daughter, settled at Mallow, where Thomas Davis was born. His boyhood seems to have been marked by peculiarities which seldom fail to distinguish the youth of poets and thinkers. He was shy, retiring, unready, and self-absorbed. One of his kinswomen, who judged him as the good people judged who mistook the young swan for an ugly duck, assured me that he was a dull child. He could scarcely be taught his letters, and she often heard the schoolboy stuttering through "My name is Norval" in a way that was pitiable to see. When he had grown up, if you asked him the day of the month, the odds were he could not tell you. He never was any good at handball or hurling, and knew no more than a fool how to take care of the money his father left him. She saw him more than once in tears listening to a common country fellow playing old airs on a fiddle, or sitting in a drawing-room as if he were in a dream, when other young people were enjoying themselves; which facts I doubt not are authentic, though the narrator somewhat mistook their significance. Milton, in painting his own inspired youth, has left a picture which will be true for ever of the class of which he was a chief:

> "When I was yet a child no childish play
> To me was pleasing; all my mind was set

Serious to learn and know; and thence to do
What might be public good: myself I thought
Born to that end—born to promote all truth,
All righteous things."

Davis was educated in Trinity College, where he was chiefly noted as a steady reader. It was remarked afterwards with wonder how little impression he made on his fellow-students; some of the most brilliant of them, it is said, entertaining a lively contempt for the silent devourer of books, who never competed for the social or rhetorical success so dear to young Irishmen. But his friends of these early days insist that his character and temper underwent a remarkable change after a year or two at college. From being retiring and cold he became frank and winning. In 1838, when he was four-and-twenty, he was called to the Bar, having shortly before written a Whig Radical pamphlet on the House of Lords. Mr Maddyn, who first met him in the College Historical Society after his call, has furnished me with a graphic picture of him at that era. The Society, which was founded by Edmund Burke nearly a century before, and had trained three generations of Irish orators and statesmen, was at this time exiled from the college which gave it a name. It held its meetings in Radley's Hotel,[1] where a number of young men who afterwards became more or less distinguished in various departments of public life, were attracting audiences by vehement and flamboyant eloquence. Isaac Butt, Joseph Lefanu, and Joseph Pollock had retired, but Torrens M'Cullagh, Thomas Wallis, James O'Hea, William Keogh, and Thomas MacNevin still held high debate, and cultivated a rhetoric too obviously borrowed from the historic contests in the Irish Parliament.[2] "A short, thick-set young man about four-and-twenty, wrapped in a fearnought coat, shambled into the room one evening and spoke to several of the members in a tone between jest and earnest. 'Who is that?' I asked. 'That,' whispered MacNevin, 'is the cataract that is to sweep away the House of Lords.'" But the gibe did not prevent Maddyn from being

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[1] Dame Street, Dublin.

[2] When Torrens M'Cullagh is mentioned in this narrative the reader ought to know that he is identical with Mr M'Cullagh Torrens, the late member for Finsbury. Joseph Lefanu is the same who afterwards won reputation as a novelist. Mr Keogh is the late Judge Keogh; Thomas Wallis, originally a tutor in Trinity College, was a writer in the *Daily News* at the time of his death in 1864; and Isaac Butt was the late leader of the Home Rule Party in the House of Commons. Mr Pollock, who finally went to the English Bar, was son of the Joseph Pollock—an Irish barrister—whose "Letters of Owen Roe" are familiar to readers of the Anti-Union pamphlets. Of MacNevin and O'Hea it will be necessary to speak later.

favourably impressed by the frank honesty of the newcomer's face and his large well-opened eyes. An intimacy ensued, and the manliness and sincerity of his nature struck his new friend more than his intellect, which seemed tame among the vigorous athletes and brilliant literary coxcombs of the University. His college career had been solid and respectable. He won a silver medal in ethics when the examination was unusually severe, and his reading was known to be far wider in its range than was the custom of the day. The aim of his studies may be gathered from an observation of Maddyn's in the letter already quoted.

"He was a Church of England man of the older and more liberal school, and was a frequent reader of Jeremy Taylor and the divines of the seventeenth century. He had sometimes a bold manner of putting his thoughts which might mislead an ignorant person; but no man was more averse than he from licentious philosophy or from profane discourse. I never recollect him speaking with levity on serious subjects. His frame of mind was naturally reverent, and the authors he habitually read were not of the mocking school. He rejoiced that the late excellent Dr Lloyd had given moral philosophy so prominent a place in the college course. He wished that Ireland should produce more statesmen of action than mere orators, more philosophers and historians than novelists and sparkling *litterateurs*, and he thought that the change made by Dr Lloyd would have a serious effect in awakening many a mind and emancipating it from the routine of mere mechanical training. From his earliest days that a high moral spirit should be raised among the upper classes was his eager desire."

Maddyn was of opinion that in 1838 Davis had not yet felt any sympathy with Irish nationality. He looked, he says, more like a young Englishman than an Irishman. He was always at work, and was distinguished by broad massive and robust qualities rather than the brighter and more brilliant characteristics of his nation. But he showed at times an ardour vehement and at the same time tender which vindicated the Celt. One who knew him earlier,[1] however, assured me that his Irish sympathies were not of recent birth. When they were in London as law students, about 1836, some generous allusion to the Irish character on the stage made the tears fall silently from Davis, whom up to that moment his companion had believed to be a Unionist and Utilitarian. In latter years I have examined his earliest studies in history

[1] The late M. R. O'Farrell, of the Irish Bar.

and philosophy, and from the beginning they are the studies of a Nationalist.

In 1840 he was elected auditor of the Historical Society, its highest executive office, but some of his associates of that day used to confess in after times, with self-reproach, and as a warning against rash judgments, that even then he was not understood or appreciated, and that one of them had fixed a nickname upon him implying essential and hopeless mediocrity. The Anglo-Irish differ from their Celtic countrymen in not being a precocious race; Swift obtained his bachelor's degree *speciali gratia;* Sheridan was pronounced by his schoolmaster to be "an incorrigible dunce;" Goldsmith could never graduate; and Curran, when he reached early manhood, was still known as "Orator Mum." The simplicity and manliness of Davis's character unfitted him for wordy and aimless contests, but he liked the Historical Society because it was the alternative of intellectual stagnation. Among his contemporaries some young men of considerable parts, and of pretensions still greater than their parts, derided the system of College honours, and declared they would not contend for such puerile objects of ambition. To read only to obtain materials for rhetorical fireworks was not a high object, but it was better than not reading at all; and Davis's subsequent career renders it highly probably that this motive lay at the root of the pains and labour he bestowed on a Society where he never made any attempt to shine. The address which he delivered according to practice on assuming office was an intense appeal to his contemporaries to think for themselves, even if they made mistakes, rather than become echoes or puppets.[1] Some of the leaders of this Society established a monthly magazine in Dublin called the *Citizen*—citizen of course not of the type of John Gilpin, but in the sense the title suggested in Athens or Rome. At first Davis was not a contributor, but when others wearied and fell off, he took up the burthen of the work. His papers were the studies of a statesman. He examined, for example, the land tenure in the northern countries of Europe, and compared it with the tenure

[1] The address was dedicated to the memory of Francis Kearney, S.T.C.D., a young man who left a great reputation, still fondly cherished by a few disciples. As there are persons who insist that the modern movement in the Church of England which began at Oxford, originated, not with Dr Newman or Dr Pusey, but with Mr Alexander Knox, so some of his contemporaries persist in tracing the National movement which began in Trinity College at this time not to the men who led and interpreted it, but to Francis Kearney. A generous young man is sure to form an inordinate estimate of the friend who first gave his mind an impulse in a particular direction; and it is certain Davis attributed to Francis Kearney, to Torrens M'Cullagh, and to Thomas Wallis, some results which his friends consider were more properly attributable to himself.

established in Ireland by English law. He investigated the character and origin of English rule in India. The Irish Parliament of James II., which has been systematically misrepresented, he made the subject of a careful review, and reprinted several of its acts *in extenso* to vindicate its moderate and practical character. But the reading public in Ireland was very limited, the class whom historical investigation interested a mere handful, and the periodical, which underwent various changes ot shape and title, had to be maintained in existence by private contributions, chiefly from the purse of William Eliot Hudson and a few of his friends.[1] It was during the decline of the *Citizen* that Davis and Dillon (who, with a keener eye for merit than some of his fellow-students, had grown to love and follow Davis) attempted to use the *Morning Register* as a vehicle for their opinions. The attempt began in a characteristic manner. The Melbourne administration had for Irish Chancellor a man who had held a foremost place in the Irish Parliament when Grattan and Bushe were his associates, and a foremost place in the Imperial Parliament when Canning and Brougham were his rivals; and the Cabinet coerced this distinguished Irishman to abandon his office in order to confer it for a few weeks on one of their adherents,[2] whose importunity was becoming troublesome. O'Connell, who detested Plunket from of old, made no sign, and the popular Press had fallen asleep at the feet of the Whigs. Failing their seniors, some members of the junior bar, led by Mr Torrens M'Cullagh, met to protest against this cynical insult to their profession and their country. Dillon sent an article anonymously to the *Register* in support of their remonstrance. It was published, and attracted immediate attention; the author was inquired after, and in a few weeks the two young barristers, who were probably jointly responsible for it, had the control of a daily paper and "could drop the same thought into a thousand minds at the same minute."[3] Another incident in their connection with the *Register* deserves to be mentioned. The Royal Dublin Society, a philosophical institution supported by a grant from Parliament, managed, as every public institution in Dublin was then managed, chiefly by Conservatives, in a freak of insolent bigotry black-balled Dr Murray, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The aged prelate, a man of moderate and even

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[1] Mr Hudson was Taxing Master in the Irish Exchequer, and brother to a Dean of the Irish Establishment. He was a man of fine intellect, cultivated taste, and warm affections; his income was dispensed for the most part in promoting Irish art and literature.

[2] Mr (afterwards Lord) Campbell.

[3] De Tocqueville.

courtly politics, and who for his private virtues was named the St Francis de Sales of the Irish Church, had afforded no justification for such an affront, and the public indignation was intense. Lord Morpeth, then Chief Secretary, intimated that the Government would withdraw the annual grant unless the Society was reformed, and there was a general assent in the popular Press that the Society ought to be permitted to perish of inanition. Davis, who from the first hour of his public life looked beyond party to national interests, faced the outcry and rebuked it. He reminded the people that the institution which they wanted to destroy was founded by an Irish Parliament when Ireland had a national life, was fostered like a child by Irish statesmen, and was almost the last native institution which the Gothic rage of English centralisation had spared. To defend such a Society may in our day seem a natural and obvious duty, but if it seems so, the teaching of Thomas Davis, more than any other agency, has wrought the change of feeling which enables some Irishmen to rate the interest of the nation above the interest of the party whose cockade they wear. At that time Ireland was still divided into two hostile camps, each of which looked upon the humiliation of the other as its proper gain.

Dillon was widely different from his friend in appearance and in some marked characteristics. In person he was tall and strikingly handsome, with eyes like a thoughtful woman's, and the clear olive complexion and stately bearing which we are accustomed to attribute to a Spanish noble. His generous nature made him more of a philantropist than a politician. He was born and reared in Connaught, among the most abject and oppressed population in Europe, and all his studies and projects had direct relation to the condition of the people. Codes, tenures, and social theories were his familiar reading, as history and biography were an inspiration to the more powerful imagination of Davis. He followed in the track of Bentham and de Tocqueville, and recognised a regulated democracy as the inevitable and rightful ruler of the world; and he saw with burning impatience the wrongs inflicted on the industrious poor by an aristocracy practically irresponsible. Davis desired a national existence for Ireland, that an old historic State might be raised from the dust, and a sceptre placed in her hand, that thus she should become the mother of a brave and self-reliant race. Dillon desired a national existence primarily to get rid of social degradation and suffering, which it wrung his heart to witness without being able to relieve. He was neither morose nor cynical, but he had one instinct in common with Swift—the villainies of mankind made

Dublin, 1847.

New York, 1865.

John Dillon

his blood boil. In moral nature he closely resembled his comrade. He had the same simplicity and unselfishness, and to him also falsehood or equivocation was impossible. He was grave with the sweet gravity which comes from habitual thought. Mr Bright, a quarter of a century later, remarked "that there was that in his eye and in the tone of his voice, and in his manner altogether, which marked him for an honourable and a just man."[1] And a more consummate judge of character (Mr Thackeray) assured me in later years that among the half-dozen men in the United States whom he loved to remember, the modesty and wholesome sweetness of Dillon (then a political refugee) gave him a foremost place. Under a stately and somewhat reserved demeanour lay latent the simplicity and joyousness of a boy. No one was readier to laugh with frank cordiality, or to give and take the pleasant banter which lends a relish to the friendship of young men. On one occasion his neglect of an appointment induced me to inquire ironically after his health as the only conceivable justification for his remissness. "Yes, my dear D.," he wrote back, "I have been laid up for the last two days, mostly in bed, but it was with the 'Mysteries of Paris.'" Dillon sprang from a middle-class family engaged in commercial pursuits, and had been originally designed for the Catholic priesthood, but after passing some years in Maynooth College he doubtless discovered that he had not the necessary vocation, for he ultimately determined to become a barrister. He had been Davis's fellow-student in Trinity, and succeeded him as auditor of the Historical Society, but he shrank from self-display, and was seldom heard in its debates. There was but one essential difference between the two friends. Dillon was a man of remarkable talents carefully cultivated, of lofty purpose sustained by steady courage, and of as pure and generous a nature as ever was given to man; but Davis was all this, and the mysterious something besides which is implied in saying that he was a man of genius.

The first number of the *Nation* was published on the 15th October 1842. The prospectus and the list of contributors had excited unusual interest, and it was eagerly waited for.[2] In shape, size, distribution of materials, and typography, it departed from the ordinary practice of Irish journals, which were immethodical and slovenly in that day. And the new form was designed to typify a new spirit. It took a

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[1] Speeches of the Right Hon. John Bright; speech in Dublin, October 31, 1866.

[2] The Prospectus is printed in the Appendix. It was written by Davis, except one sentence.

motto which expressed its exact purpose. When Municipal Reform was before Parliament, Peel asked contemptuously what good corporations would do a country so poor as Ireland. "I will tell the right honourable gentleman," said Stephen Woulfe, afterwards Chief Baron, "they will go far to create and foster public opinion, and make it racy of the soil." This was the aim of the *Nation*, and we took for motto "To create and foster public opinion in Ireland, and make it racy of the soil."[1] A quantity of the new paper was printed, considerably in excess of the number issued by the most popular journals in Dublin; but before the close of the day the edition was exhausted, and, as the type had been distributed, copies were selling for two or three times the published price. At the present day the first number will fetch forty times the published price. It contained articles by Davis, Dillon, and the Editor, and poems by Clarence Mangan and O'Callaghan. Tested by the subsequent character of the paper, it was feeble and immethodic; but contrasted with contemporary journalism, a different verdict was pronounced by the public.[2]

The teaching of the new journal, had it been carelessly written,

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[1] Woulfe's friend and biographer, Mr Curran, remarks that he has left no memorable saying but this motto, and in truth even this one is scarcely original. It bears too close a resemblance to a sentence in Macaulay's Essay on Boswell's Johnson. "We know no production of the human mind which has so much of what may be called 'the race,' so much of the peculiar flavour of the soil from which it sprung."

[2] The day the journal appeared, Davis wrote to his friend, Daniel Owen Maddyn, whose help as a reviewer he desired to secure:—

"The *Nation* sold its whole impression of No. 1 before twelve o'clock this morning, and could have sold twice as many more if they had been printed, as they ought to have been, but the fault is on the right side. The office window was actually broken by the newsmen in their impatience to get more. The article called 'The Nation' is by Duffy, 'Aristocratic Institutions' by Dillon, 'The First Number' by Mangan, 'Ancient Irish Literature,' 'The Epigram on Stanley' and the capital 'Exterminators' Song' are by O'Callaghan. The article on 'The English Army in Afghanistan, etc.,' the mock proclamation to the Irish soldiers, and the reviews of the two Dublin magazines, are by myself. . . . The articles you propose will do admirably in your hands. Duffy is the very greatest admirer of the sketches of Brougham and Peel that I ever met. [Sketches by Maddyn in the *Dublin Monthly Magazine*.] Perhaps in a newspaper the points should be more salient and the writing more rough and uncompromising than in a magazine. Duffy seems to think that if number three, your lightest dare-devilish poteen article, were to come first, it would most readily fall in with the rest of the arrangements."—Davis to Maddyn, Oct. 15, '42.

And shortly afterwards he wrote:—

"Duffy and I are delighted at your undertaking the notice of Father Mathew. In your hands and with your feeling the article will be worthy of the man. The portrait of him will not be out of Landell's hands for a little time. The Shiel or the Avonmore and O'Loughlin would probably come best next. 4000 copies to-day, equal

would probably have arrested attention by its originality. It was not an echo of the Association or its leader, as national journals had commonly been, but struck out a distinct course for itself. O'Connell, as we have seen, had appealed to the material interest of the people; he insisted that trade and commerce withered, and national and individual prosperity declined, under the Union. But there were lessons of profounder influence over the human breast which he had not attempted to teach. Passion and imagination have won victories which reason and self-interest would have attempted in vain, and it was on these subtle forces the young men mainly counted. The complaint of Ireland had been contemptuously described as a Beggar's Petition; they were of opinion that it ought rather to be presented as a new Petition of Rights; the claim of an ancient historic nation, which had been robbed of its constitution, stated with scrupulous fairness, but stated as from equal to equal, and persisted in to all extremities should it need martyrs like Eliot or soldiers like Hampden. And though long servitude had left the mass of the people not only ignorant of the historic past, but ignorant of contemporary events beyond the narrow horizon of their personal experience, there was a generation issuing from college, and from the National schools, and gathered into the temperance societies, who, it might be hoped, would constitute a fit audience for lessons of more informed and generous patriotism. The writers commenced from the first number to treat the case of Ireland, and the claim to have her constitution restored, in a tone disused since the time when a Senate and citizen army still existed to give significance to the national sentiments. The historic names, dimly remembered by the people as of men upon whom the law had left the stain of blood or banishment, and who had been generally ignored by later writers, or named only as examples of unwise enthusiasm, were reinstated on their pedestals, and treated as Scotland treats Wallace or Poland treats Kosciusko. Foreign affairs were considered primarily as they affected the interests of Ireland, not as they affected the interests of England. The rights and feelings of Protestant Irishmen were discussed with scrupulous respect and fairness, but

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to the *Freeman* and double any other weekly paper. The country people are delighted with us if their letters speak true. We have several ballads, aye and not bad ones, ready; 'Noctes' squibs, etc., in preparation. In the present number, 'The Reduction of Rents' and the Continental Literature with the translation from La Mennais (who has, I see, turned missionary) are by Dillon. 'The O'Connell Tribute' is by Daunt (aided by Duffy's revision and my quotation from Burke). 'The Revolution in Canada' and 'An Irish Vampire' are mine."

their monopolies and prejudices were unsparingly denounced. And week after week songs were published full of passionate longing for the revival of an Irish nation, uttered in language which the timid called sedition, but which was merely the long-silenced voice of national self-respect.

It is impossible at this time to realise the amazement, the consternation, swelling almost to panic, and the final enthusiasm and intoxication of joy with which the new teaching was received, especially by the young of all classes. Every number of the *Nation* contained new trains of thought, new projects and suggestions, new poems and essays, which thrilled the national mind like electric shocks. The ideas were sometimes crude and extravagant, and often fanciful and unpractical, but they were always generous in design; and there are few Irishmen of any party who deny that they wonderfully elevated and purified the spirit of the country. The success of this teaching has made it familiar and perhaps commonplace; this narrative, however, would be incomplete without some brief account of it.

But teaching is successful in proportion as it accommodates itself to the needs of those who are to be taught. It must not be forgotten that the Ireland which the young writers addressed was widely different from the Ireland of to-day. Great calamities and notable concessions have fundamentally changed it, and a factor which proved in the end to be a more powerful solvent of national prejudice than either calamities or concessions, the new doctrines which these writers taught.

It is difficult to describe the condition of Ireland at that time without seeming to employ the language of exaggeration. All external symbols of nationality were nearly as effectually banished from Dublin as they were banished from Warsaw under the Cossack, or from Venice under the Austrian. There was not the monument of a single Irishman in the metropolis; so that a foreigner was said to have inquired, after examining the statues of German, English, and Dutch personages, whether Ireland had produced no man entitled to be perpetuated in bronze! And this blank existed not only where the State had control, but more fatally in places where it marked the decay of national feeling in the community. It was mentioned in an early number of the journal that the sculptors' shops having been visited, Shakespeares and Scotts, Homers and Dantes, were found in abundance, but the bust of scarcely one man of Irish birth except the Duke of Wellington. In other capitals the streets are named after memorable victories, or illustrious

men, or historic houses, and help to foster a national spirit; Belgium commemorates in them her great interests, France her great battles. In Dublin they were named after a long line of forgotten English officials, Essex and Dorset, Harcourt and Sackville; but neither the great Celtic houses of O'Neill and O'Brien, nor the great Norman houses of Fitzgerald and Butler, neither Jonathan Swift nor Luke Wadding, Patrick Sarsfield nor Owen O'Neil, Burke nor Goldsmith, Curran nor Plunket, gave a title to a single street, square, or bridge in the metropolis. In the system of national education the geography and topography of Ireland were placed on a par with the geography and topography of Scotland and Switzerland, and Irish history and biography were strictly excluded. A generation earlier, John Keogh, the Catholic leader of that day, declared that you might recognise a Catholic on the street by his timid gait; and the bulk of the national party were still Catholics who had not wholly outgrown the traditions of slavery.

In literature, it was a period of reaction and depression. The enthusiasm of the Catholic contest had passed away. The flame lighted by the genius of Moore, and which Banim and Griffin, Callanan and Lady Morgan had kept alive, burned low. Whatever literature existed in Ireland belonged to the party dominant in Church and State. The class who lived by letters was not numerous, but it was in a decisive degree English in spirit and sympathy. The societies connected with antiquities and art were in the hands of Conservatives or Whigs. There were not half a dozen men among the governing bodies who would have professed themselves Repealers, or to whom the name of O'Connell did not sound like an alarm bell. The one prosperous publisher was a Conservative; the one successful periodical [1] was more hostile to Irish ideas than the *Times*. A fierce "No Popery" spirit coloured the writings of the Conservative Press, and was rendered more bitter and intractable by the zeal of deserters. The man of most authentic genius in fiction, though born and bred a Catholic, had allied himself with the dominant party. The chief organ of the Conservatives was conducted by a journalist of ability who had once belonged to the creed he habitually assailed. The prevailing influence in politics and literature in the last resort was understood to reside in the Rev. Mortimer O'Sullivan, a controversialist of unusual vigour and resources, but who had changed from the persecuted to the prosperous creed.[2]

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[1] *Dublin University Magazine.*

[2] Mr O'Sullivan carried with him into his new connection a brother who also became a clergyman of the Established Church and an indefatigable writer of

In party journals the people were described every day as rebels and assassins whom no law could tame. The provincial papers fed this spirit by exaggerating, and sometimes inventing, Agrarian disturbances. "The State of the Country" was a standing heading in their columns. With all these writers, "Irish" was a word of reproach. Irish ideas and Irish arguments were like Irish diamonds, the worst of their class. The gentry and clergy of the party on whose support the writers rested generally enjoyed the sport, for they were in possession of profitable monopolies doomed to perish the moment England ceased to be deceived, or Ireland to be cowed. Among the Whigs who had thrown off sectarian bigotry and were liberal in their politics and their sympathies, there was little national feeling. They had accepted for the most part English rules of taste and opinion; and they were nurtured on a literature of which some of the greatest masters, from Spenser and Milton, to Carlyle and Thackeray in a later day, have been contemptuous and unjust to Ireland. Foreign politics and foreign literature came to Dublin exclusively through the English Press; no Irish journal maintained a continental correspondent, or, with rare exceptions, reviewed a foreign book. There was no periodical of national sympathies except the moribund *Citizen* under one of its transformations. Books were dear, and only to be obtained in the great towns; there were counties without a regular bookseller's shop. Stamped paper, going free through the post-office, was the sole medium through which the mind of the people could be reached.

In the London literature which concerned itself with Ireland and sought an audience there, Maxwell had begun to paint as Irish types the dashing dragoons and gossiping campaigners who afterwards swarmed in such profusion from the brain of Lever; and Carleton, who described the peasantry with genuine knowledge and power, still mixed with his colours the black bile of sectarianism. On the stage the Irishman familiar to the Adelphi and unknown in Munster—a blundering simpleton or a prodigious fire-eater—was habitually presented to Dublin audiences for their applause.[1]

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polemics. They were both men of fine presence and athletic proportions. Lever, in one of his wild skits in the *University Magazine*, describes a salmon he caught in the Bann as being almost as long as——(Sam O'Sullivan) and nearly as broad in the shoulders as——(Murty). Mortimer's ability could not be denied, but censorious critics used to discriminate between him and his brother Sam by designating the latter "Sham" O'Sullivan.

[1] The English idea of Ireland was chiefly derived from sources like these, and a bewildered Cockney, reared on the libels and caricatures of the day, on his return from a visit to Dublin is said to have assured his friends that he could not find a single Irishman in the country.

The songs sung in places of public recreation were in the main some grotesque distortion of Irish manners, like Bryan O'Lynn or Barney Brallaghan. The Gaelic songs which still circulated in the cabins were entirely unknown in the workshops or taverns. These habits and practices told fatally on the people themselves. Sayings circulated among them which accepted the assumption of their enemies that they were an inferior race, such as "an Irishman must have leave to speak twice" or "hunt him like a Redshank"—a Redshank being the Anglo-Irish nickname for a native who did not submit to military authority after the fall of Limerick. They greatly misjudged themselves. In truth, the poor freeholders who had voted against their landlords to win Catholic Emancipation, though they knew that eviction from their homes would probably follow, had exhibited a fortitude beside which military courage is poor and vulgar, and they and their forefathers had shown a persistence in maintaining their religious convictions against persecution and temptation, which, on a more conspicuous stage, would have been recognised by mankind as heroic. But they only saw their visage in the mirror presented by their enemies.

No school-book of Irish history was in use in any Irish school at that time, while English history was universally taught. Whatever a boy learned of the story of his own country was from gossip or tradition, and was in general a mass of confused fable. The books which circulated most extensively in the provinces were the "Seven Champions of Christendom," "The Irish Rogues and Rapparees," "The Life of Freeny the Robber," "The Battle of Aughrim," and in Ulster, "Billy Bluff," and "Paddy's Resource." The "Champions of Christendom" professes to contain "the honourable births, noble achievements by sea and land in divers strange countries, and wonderful adventures in deserts, wildernesses, and enchanted castles of St George of England, St Denis of France, St James of Spain, St Anthony of Italy, St Andrew of Scotland, St Patrick of Ireland, and St David of Wales." It opens by recounting how, "not long after the destruction of Troy sprung up these seven wonders of the world," and is in all respects a fair specimen of the popular chronology and geography of the period. The Irish Rapparees (or Tories) were disbanded soldiers of the Irish army which submitted to William III. at Limerick. The bulk of the garrison went to France, but some remained and became a terror to the Puritan settlers, and were treated by the English Government in Dublin as banditti. With their memoirs, which supply as natural a subject for popular sympathy as the adventures of Robin Hood or Rob Roy, there

got mixed up stories of modern highwaymen and burglars in a manner very characteristic of the state of historical knowledge in the country. "The Battle of Aughrim" is a play composed in pedantic and stilted verse, modelled on Dryden's rhymed dramas. It was written soon after the event in the interest of the conquerors, but in the end became universally popular with the descendants of the conquered race, because their historic men were treated with a certain dramatic truth, with which they were delighted, at a time when the printing press was in the exclusive possession of their enemies. "Billy Bluff" is a series of humorous and graphic letters on the state of the country, contributed in 1796 by a Presbyterian minister, the Reverend James Porter, to the *Northern Star*, the organ of the United Irishmen in Belfast. He opens with an ironical complaint that he is in danger of being hanged by the neighbouring squire for his political opinions. Half a century later I stood by his tombstone in Grey Abbey, County Down, the ruins of a sumptuous monastery founded by John de Courcy twenty generations earlier—where it is recorded that "he departed this life in his forty-fifth year," the stout Presbyter having in fact been hanged at his own door by the squire in question, for his connection with the insurrection of '98, the pasquinades of "Billy Bluff" included. "Paddy's Resource," which the people, with their invariable habit of translating words of unknown import into some familiar phrase, call "Paddy's Racehorse," is a collection of songs from the *Northern Star*, some of them ridiculing "Billy Pitt," and lauding General Buonaparte and Tom Paine, or glorifying the "Carmagnole" in terms which must have sorely puzzled the farm-labourers and shop-boys of Ulster. These last-named volumes were still issued from the Belfast press, and sold by pedlars throughout the North in 1840 without a printer's name, as if Fitzgibbon and Castlereagh were on the watch to put the publisher in the pillory. When I add to these the "Hibernian Tales," a collection of native stories, and "Ward's Cantoes," a burlesque history of the Reformation, not without some touches of Hudibrastic humour, the books known to the people will be exhausted. Respecting the graver and worthier parts of our annals, the popular mind was almost a blank. There were, of course, antiquaries and men of studious habits who not only maintained the study but pursued it with the assiduity which generous men are apt to bestow upon whatever is unduly slighted; but among the educated classes generally, though the knowledge was not extinct it was inexact, and coloured by the unfriendly source from which it was necessarily

derived.[1] Beyond a vague sense of disaster and injustice, the mass of the people knew little of the past. I can remember hearing when a boy from some of the *seanachies*, to whom I was always ready to listen, a story of "the time of the troubles" in which the massacre in Rathlin (under Charles I.) and the cruelties of the Ancient Britons[2] (under George III.) made part of the same transaction. Besides Brian Borhoime (Brian of the Tributes), the national hero, there were no names historic among the people except Patrick Sarsfield, Henry Grattan, and Lord Edward Fitzgerald; one a figure huge enough to make itself visible over the whole of the conflict with England; the others, except Sarsfield, men of yesterday. The leaders of '98 would doubtless have furnished other popular idols but that O'Connell habitually disparaged them, and their names were seldom mentioned on the public platform. It was the policy of the opponents of Emancipation to represent the Catholics as rebels by principle and from the necessity of their position; and he thought it essential to deny that they were rebels or had any sympathy with rebels, and in pursuing this policy he was often unjust to the dead. He went further, indeed, and insisted on the marvellous theory that Catholics were not only necessarily loyal from the duty of obedience to lawful authority which they were taught, but passionately devoted to the reigning dynasty and the English connection. The Catholics were no doubt taught obedience and loyalty, and had sometimes reason to prefer the policy of St James to the policy of the Castle; but human nature is not so constituted that the mass of mankind can love what injures and humiliates them, under whatever sanction the claim may be made.

In lieu of a national literature, the speeches of O'Connell and Sheil fed the appetite for legendary poetry which can never be suppressed in a Celtic people. There they at least heard of their country as something which it was noble to love and serve; and they naturally imitated the performances which they admired. Speech-making was a universal recreation. It was no uncommon thing to hear half a score of harangues

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[1] The *Irish Penny Magazine* and the *Dublin Penny Journal*, in which Petrie, O'Donovan, Eugene Curry, and others wrote on Irish antiquities in a cautious and sober strain, not always employed in that department of learning, made some way among the middle classes between 1830 and 1840, but not much. Mr Ferguson (afterwards Sir Samuel Ferguson, Q.C., Deputy Keeper of the Records in Ireland) had also by a series of articles in the *Dublin University Magazine*, on the "Attractions and Capabilities of Ireland," turned the attention of students to national subjects, but the circulation of the magazine was almost exclusively among the gentry and Protestant clergy.

[2] A Welsh militia regiment quartered in Ireland in 1798.

uttered of an evening over a private dinner-table. "Who," I have heard a gentleman demand of a dozen of his guests a few years earlier, standing aloft and waving his right hand fiercely, "who wrung the Magna Charta from the pusillanimous John on the plains of Runnymede, between Staines and Windsor? Who but the Catholic barons, upon whose descendants they have shut the door of Parliament?" But sometimes the discourse was more *ad rem*. In 1826, when I was ten years of age, my native county was agitated by a contested election between two local families, of one of whom I found myself a prodigious partisan without knowing precisely why. A shrewd attorney at my guardian's table let in a flood of light on my mind by one of the inevitable speeches of the evening. "'What's Henry Westenra to us?' I have been asked," he said. "Why, everything. The right to live on equal terms with our neighbours, the right not to be insulted in our own houses by Orange processions, or harangued from the bench by Orange judges or Orange justices. What's Westenra to us? Nothing at all as Westenra; but as the candidate pledged to Catholic Emancipation something more precious than our daily bread and dearer than the children by our firesides."

Songs were also common at every dinner-table, and some rude local ballad was ordinarily the favourite. I have seen tears fall like rain as a man familiar with "the times of the troubles" sang in slow tender tones of genuine feeling—

> "The Lord in His mercy be good to Belfast:
> The poor Irish exile she soothed as he passed,"

or faces flush with pride over Rory O'More; not Sam Lover's *spalpeen*, but the grand Rory of 1641:

> "Now, the taunt and the threat let the coward endure;
> Our hope is in God and in Rory O'More."

The audience never seemed to have too much of Rory, and for my part I knew his achievements better than the multiplication table.[1]

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[1] In the kitchen the entertainment was only slightly varied to suit a simpler taste. Living in an Orange district where armed processions and summons by beat of drum were not infrequent, it made a boy's heart beat fast with a lively enjoyment to hear the anti-Orange song—

> "Up to Keady we will go
> And see who daar oppose us."

The singer most familiar to my memory was deeply read in Pastorini's prophecies, and disposed to do a little prophesying occasionally on his own account, always of a dreadfully sanguinary hue. There was something mysterious and wonderfully

From this people there might have been drawn an army inflamed with courage and enthusiasm, and capable of great endurance and perfect discipline; but for a civil contest, whose chief weapon is informed opinion, they were not so well equipped. And the Union no longer rested on British authority alone. The Protestant gentry and clergy guarded it more effectually than the military garrison. The bulk of them deliberately preferred the English connection with all its consequences. The chief prizes of the State and the profuse endowments of the Church suggest obvious motives; but they understand human nature imperfectly who do not recognise that it was intrinsically easier for the Catholic to forget his wrongs than for the Protestant to forget his long ascendancy. Others who did not prefer the Union regarded it as inevitable. Some hated O'Connell as a demagogue to whom power would necessarily fall, and not a few who were nationalists at bottom had genuine fears of a hobgoblin, which they called Popery. There were besides the truculent, the foolish, and the greedy, who see no duty beyond that of resisting any change in a system which is profitable to themselves.

As this state of the country was the product of law and policy, long employed to produce such a result,[1] it will be scarcely possible to comprehend the task these writers undertook, or the agencies proper to accomplish it, without keeping constantly in view the causes from which the condition sprang. To-day is the child of yesterday, and the Irishman of 1842, with whom they had to deal, was peculiarly the creation of remote causes and antecedent forces. Neither can the teachers themselves be understood except on the same terms. That a group of men, not deficient in capacity or judgment, persuaded themselves that Ireland ought to break away from the Union at any cost, and won an extraordinary ascendancy over the public mind on the strength of this belief, will be a puzzle to Englishmen till they have obtained some knowledge of the wrongs needing redress and the errors needing correction.

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impressive in the manner in which he delivered this mystical sentiment as the preface to a glass of whisky—

> "Here's the white eagle with the green wing.
> A bloody summer and a new king."

I puzzled my youthful mind excessively over that parti-coloured bird, and I am not clear yet whether it was the eagle that grasped the thunderbolt of the Western Republic or the eagle that once perched on the standard of Buonaparte that was to acquire the green wing and bring about the other results indicated by the oracle.

[1] "I have no doubt that a peasantry of Protestant Germans might, if properly oppressed and brutalised, be made as bad as the Irish."—Sir George Cornewall Lewis's Letters.

CHAPTER IV.

TEACHING OF THE NATION.

To teach a people emerging from long servitude to appreciate public rights at a just value, and to assert them, not with the fury and fickleness of slaves, but with moderation and firmness, was not an easy task. To many self-complacent persons, and to all the fanatics of major force, it will seem plain indeed that it is a task which ought never to have been undertaken; the duty of a good citizen being to exhort the people to be content with their lot. But there are surely some who will better understand the problem. A man has but one mother country: if he sees her in rags and tears while her next neighbour lives in comfort and splendour, it is scarcely good to be content or to preach contentment. If he knows that she is living under the lash of unequal laws, that the guardian sword of justice has been long turned against her bosom as a weapon of assault, that she was made poor and is kept poor by perverse legislation, it would be base to be content; for "nations are not called on like private persons when smitten on one cheek to turn the other." [1]

The first and hardest step was to revive self-reliance and self-respect, which misgovernment had nearly extinguished in the mass of the people. The next was to familiarise them with rights and duties long in abeyance. A man with clear convictions and exact knowledge is a greater power than ten men wanting these endowments, and force and tension of character may be increased in a community in the same proportion. If Ireland was to rely on opinion alone in her contest with England, the need was great that opinion should not only be organised as O'Connell proposed to organise it, but that it should be informed and disciplined.

The most disheartening of the popular errors were assailed one after another, and week after week, with a fulness of knowledge new in Irish

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[1] Aubrey de Vere.

Melbourne, 1880

Dublin, 1844

Charles Gavan Duffy

journalism, and a fire of conviction which was contagious. The influence which these young men came to win in Irish affairs will be best understood by some *précis* of the opinions which they taught.

Ireland had only a limited territory and population; but was she on that account, as her enemies alleged, doomed to an inferior position? History told a different tale. Small states were not necessarily insignificant. Look at Portugal and Holland; look at Sweden and Prussia. Each of them had created an era in the world's history. Nor were small states necessarily short-lived; Venice had a longer pedigree than France, and Switzerland had seen the rise and fall of huge empires. It was on the character, not on the number of its population, that the prosperity and power of a state depended.

Did the history of Ireland forbid her to hope for a great career? Not so. Her enemies alleged that it was the annals of a people always in the wrong: of a people who had not bequeathed one great name to posterity. But, rightly understood, the history of Ireland abounded in noble lessons, and had the unity and purpose of an epic poem. It exhibited an unbroken determination to maintain their national existence, which every generation of Irishmen took up anew, from the twelfth century to the nineteenth. The father of modern history, Augustin Thierry, bore testimony that "this unconquerable obstinacy never to despair of a constantly vanquished cause, a cause fatal to all who dared to espouse and defend it, was perhaps the greatest example that a people has ever given." Deficient in great names? On the contrary, they were plentiful as stars in the sky, if we would open our eyes to recognise them. Before the English invasion Ireland was, on the admission of the most prejudiced of Englishmen, in the language of Dr Johnson, echoed in our own day by Guizot and Carlyle, "the school of the West, the great habitation of sanctity and learning." England had not more certainly conquered India than Ireland had civilised and Christianised a great part of Europe.[1]

Week after week the names and services of the spiritual warriors who carried the Cross into pagan lands were made familiar to the people. The list is longer than Homer's catalogue of ships, but the memory may lay hold, among the most notable of these Irish missionaries, of the names of Columbkill, the apostle of the Picts; St Kilian, the apostle of Franconia; St Colman, the patron saint of Austria; St Aidon, the

[1] "Of all the countries of the West, Ireland was for a long time that in which alone learning was supported and throve amid the general overthrow of Europe."—Guizot's "History of France."

apostle of Northumberland; St Columbanus, the rival of Benedict himself as a founder of religious houses; and their legislator, the famous scholar whom Charlemagne placed over the universities of Paris and Pavia, Johannes Scotus Erigina, the reviver of Greek philosophy; and one still more renowned—Duns Scotus, the "subtle doctor," the rival of Thomas Aquinas, who filled Christendom with his fame.

Nor did the Middle Ages or modern times want their notable men. The chiefs who had made alliances, on behalf of Ireland, with France and Spain, the soldiers who had fought in later times against foreign rule, and the patriots who had conspired against it, were rescued from under mounds of misrepresentation, and the people taught, in ballad and essay, that these were not men to be ashamed of, but the flower of their race. To forget her martyrs and confessors would be folly as well as baseness; laborious and unprofitable days awaited all who turned from the pleasant paths of corruption to toil for Ireland; they must not be further disheartened by feeling that the labourers who went before them had not had their reward. The services of Irishmen in the armies of France and Austria, in the diplomacy of Spain and Italy, in the wars of liberation in North and South America, were described. Irishmen had won conspicuous place in every country where a career was open to them; even in England, where an Irishman was treated as a foreigner and an inferior, how many of the successes in arts, arms, statesmanship, and literature, recorded as British successes, were won by Irishmen? The English books most familiar to France and Germany were the books of Irishmen—the "Vicar of Wakefield" and the "Sentimental Journey." The insular names best known between the Straits of Gibraltar and the Gulf of Bothnia were Wellington and O'Connell.

Their own history was a chart of perils to be avoided, and of paths that might safely be pursued, of which they knew nothing; for to the untaught the Past is a region as blank as the Future; but from the Past the veil might be lifted by knowledge. Irishmen had learned the history of Ireland from a source where it was deliberately falsified. Their enemies described their bravery as turbulence, their resistance to oppression as profligate enterprises, their native civilisation as barbarity. When regions were made desolate and handed over to the murderers of the Celtic population, they were said to be civilised. Irishmen had used their national annals as a cemetery from which to dig up the skeletons of mouldering crimes for mutual assault, but the true lesson they taught was that Irishmen were enslaved because they were divided. Their Protestant forefathers were often pampered and protected by England, as her garrison, and their Catholic forefathers reduced to slaves because they were dangerous to English ascendancy. If they forgot hereditary feuds they might create a noble future for their common country. Ireland must aim to be Irish, not Anglo-Irish; because vigour, and health,

and great achievements belong to men and nations which follow their nature, not to those broken to a foreign mould. But Irish must no longer mean Celtic; from whatever stock they sprang, Celtic, Norman, or Saxon, if men loved and served the country, they were Irish. Hereditary party spirit was an *ignis fatuus* in a country where the lineal descendants of the O'Neills, O'Briens, and O'Connors were Unionists, and where Philpot Curran, Wolfe Tone, and Theobald Matthew sprang from Cromwellian soldiers.

The pursuit of knowledge was incited not with the zeal of a schoolmaster but with the fervour of a lover.

The first want of the people was knowledge, long withheld by a jealous master. England shut up Ireland like another Casper Hausar in a dungeon, and told her whatever she thought proper of herself and of the rest of the world. The depression of Ireland did not flow from resources undeveloped—empty bays, or water-power running waste—so much as from men without information or discipline. Education made the sons of Scotch farmers and of American farmers able to compete for leading places in the world's business; and the want of education left the sons of Irish farmers to sweat under the most toilsome and ignoble burdens at home and abroad.

From ignorance comes sycophancy. Slaves look upon their masters with superstitious awe; upon themselves with superstitious distrust. Rigid discipline and careful training could alone make the young men of Ireland able to win freedom and worthy to enjoy it. Let them get knowledge; knowledge and tyranny could not long exist together. The counsels of Franklin broke the English yoke in America as effectually as the sword of Washington.

Educate that you may be free. It is education which will enable you to take advantage of opportunities. The highest training, however, is that of the character. The practice of speaking and acting only the truth, more than military or commercial or intellectual eminence, makes a country great and happy; while contempt for obligations and authority does not make citizens but banditti. The slave's vice of paltering with the truth clings to our people like the rust of chains. They must unlearn the practice of boasting and exaggeration; they must learn—hard task to a demonstrative, imaginative people—to be direct and literal; to be prompt in saying "This is not true: I will not believe it"; "This is not just: I will not do it."

Among the knowledge most needed was the knowledge of other nations and races. Ireland ought to have a FOREIGN POLICY, but not necessarily the foreign policy of England, which often originated in

feelings or interests in which Ireland had no share. Irishmen wanted the sympathy and good-will of other nations, and to obtain their sympathy and good-will must learn to be just to them. Why should they not? England insulted them, but from France and America they got good wishes and respect. States hostile to England had educated their youth in the penal times, and were their allies against her in war and diplomacy. The Catholic asked in vain for the slightest mitigation of his slavery, till Dumourier at Gemappe scared away the royal conspirators against liberty. Even to-day, what interests had the merchants of Dublin or the farmers of Down in the oppression of the Afghan or the Kaffir? They owed allegiance to Victoria, Queen of England and Ireland; they owed no allegiance either in law or conscience to the agents of English crime. Among her recent achievements in foreign policy England obtained modifications in the tariffs of France and Portugal; and when one scrutinised the result it was found that English manufacturers were relieved, while Irish products continued subject to their former burden. But what other result could come of nations trusting their foreign policy to strange hands? The sympathy of friendly nations was not a light thing. The alliance of Prussia carried England through the wars of the eighteenth century; the good-will of France rescued the wavering fortunes of America.

This dazzling theory was brought home to their practical experience week after week by familiar illustrations.

Look at Belgium, a country where the farmer was owner of the soil, where his improvements were an investment for his children and grandchildren, not a prey to a landlord. A small country which escaped from the control of a stronger neighbour and enjoyed the blessing of self-government. A Catholic country where the religious liberty of Protestants was as secure as in England. Were not these texts for serious thought?

Look at Canada, with a scantier population than the smallest province of Ireland. The leaders of the national party, upon whose heads a price was set five years ago as rebels, were now called upon to govern the country because they possessed the confidence of the people. Must Canada have a will of her own and Ireland no will?

Look at Germany; loaded with the weight of a military despotism, and watched by a troop of princes as spies and sentinels, a national spirit was being fostered and developed among the whole Teutonic people which would blossom into a German nation. Why not an Irish nation?

Look at Catholic France, with a Protestant Prime Minister; look at Catholic Belgium with a Protestant King, and learn that religion need not divide a people, nor a Catholic majority alarm Protestant Irishmen.

Look at cold rocky Norway, where the peasant was prosperous and independent, well clad and well fed, because he owned the soil; while in soft and fertile Ireland the peasants were more miserably poor than any other people on God's earth. Let Irishmen ask themselves, Was there no cure? Why were the Irish so poor where the country was so rich? Why were so many foreigners well off on worse soil and in a harder climate?

Irishmen were taunted with Irish poverty. But Irish poverty was a shameful and senseless cry in a land so richly endowed, unless they traced it to the root from which it sprang, and resolved to pluck forth the root—gently if it would come; if not, with a strong hand. What was the root? A land code such as existed nowhere else on the earth. The social condition of Ireland was a monstrous combination of poverty and profusion. The people were poor in comparison with any people savage or civilised on the face of the globe; the gentry were prodigal beyond their class in any country in Europe. The law enabled them to take possession of an inordinate share of the produce of the soil, and to pull down the farmer's homestead and confiscate his improvements. Every law which produced on the whole more misery than happiness was wicked, and ought to be abolished or resisted. But resistance on the part of the tenantry was punished by eviction, which often meant death by cold and hunger. It was time to inquire why should landowners in Ireland be the only class of creditors possessing the power of life and death.

To win and sustain her rank as a nation Ireland must possess the elements that constitute a nation in a high degree. In position, climate, coasts, and soil she had them in the highest, and in population and wealth sufficiently high. But she wanted an ample supply of public men, trained in every part of knowledge and business to carry on her internal government and foreign relations. She wanted national literature and art. To obtain them she must honour and reward the scholars and artists who made Ireland their home, whatever might be their political opinions, for great men make a great nation. But if in addition to the prizes, the society, the station, which England offered to emigrant genius, were added poverty and want of recognition at home, many men would find the motives to emigrate too powerful to be resisted. Every class and profession in England had already Irishmen

in its first ranks. Wellington, Maclise, Moore, Macready, Sheil, M'Dowell, Sheridan, Knowles, Farran, Barry, and a multitude of others helped to adorn a country which was not their own.

It was by these means Ireland might hope to have the best security for liberty. A people educated enough to practise all the arts of peace and war, having respect for their own character and other men's rights, a people industrious in the field, intelligent in the shop, obedient in the camp, fearless in the ranks, and producing men able to govern the nation in peace or lead it in battle.

England and Ireland, it was affirmed, were geographically one, and could not be separated. How so? England is nearer France; are they geographically one? Portugal might be claimed by Spain, and Belgium by France, on this plea. It was on this flimsy plea that Austria held Venice.

We were taunted with the hopelessness of contending with an Empire upon whose plundered dominions the sun never sets. Spain, in her pride and ignorance, made the self-same boast in the self-same words, and to-day she lay like a dismantled hulk on the waters, the helpless prey of robbers, because she had been persistently unjust and selfish. Prussia, when it had not a fourth of our population, encountered *all* the great Continental Powers successfully. Holland bore up against the greatest empire, save Napoleon's, in modern times. Sweden carried her arms from the Rhine to the Moskwa, and was the acknowledged protector of Germany. Portugal disputed the colonial empire with England, and only lost it from corruption.

When a people have the boundaries and history, the separate character and physical resources, and, still more, when they have the virtue and genius of a nation, they are bound in conscience, in prudence, and in wisdom, to assert their individuality, no matter how conciliation may lure or armies threaten.

Nationality would create a race of men full of a more intensely Irish character and knowledge, and to that race it would give Ireland. It would give them the seas of Ireland to sweep with their nets and their navy; the harbours of Ireland to receive a great commerce; the soil of Ireland to live on, by more millions than starve there now; the fame of Ireland to enhance by their genius and valour; the independence of Ireland to guard by their wisdom and arms.

The Tory journals called the attention of the Public Prosecutor to these dangerous doctrines; but this menace was met by a more deliberate

exposition of them. It was the treatment of contemporary parties, however, which produced the angriest clamour. Catholic Irishmen were for the most part Whigs, the Whigs having made generous sacrifices during the last quarter of a century to abolish the religious disabilities which earlier Whigs had imposed; and the majority of Protestant Irishmen were Tories, but Tories who inherited the opinions of the Puritans rather than of the Cavaliers. One of the most conspicuous of them was accustomed to say that he "never visited London without taking a look at Whitehall where the greatest transaction in English History took place"—the transaction which abruptly terminated the reign of Charles I. On both sides these partisans regarded themselves as armies of reserve for the warfare maintained in the House of Commons. The *Nation* rebuked them in language which has since become trite, and has sometimes degenerated into cant, but which in that day was startling from its novelty.

Put no faith in Toryism (this was the keynote struck in the first number) and as little in Whiggery. There are only two parties in Ireland—those who suffer from her degradation and those who profit by it. Politics mean the science of governing a country to its advantage and honour; not the calculation of chances between competitors for Government billets; and the interest of Ireland is wholly irrespective of the question who is to be the next judge, bishop, or policeman.

Cease to live in hostile camps at home as Protestants and Catholics (this was a frequent text); your interests as Irishmen are absolutely identical. The remaining institutions and symbols of Protestant ascendancy indeed must disappear, that we may be all equal before the law; but our lives and fortunes, and the honourable fame we hope to win, are pledged that the religious liberty of Protestants shall be as secure as we desire to make the religious liberty of Catholics.

These opinions were addressed to the people not once, or in one form only, but constantly and in many forms. They had heard appeals to their interest and egotism with comparative indifference, but not so did they hear appeals to their generous pride as a nation. While veteran journalists were still scoffing at them as fantastic novelties, these opinions had taken root among students of law and medicine, in the University, in Maynooth, in the Temperance Societies, and the National Schools. And after a little the young tradesmen in towns and the young peasants

who listened to the *Nation* read aloud around the forge fire of an evening, or in the chapel yard on a Sunday morning, were swaying to and fro in the fever of a new faith for which they were impatient to labour and suffer.

For the country which had been conjured up before their young imagination was as little the Ireland of the period, whining complaints or framing petitions for some scanty crumb of relief, as the Ireland of English burlesque; it was the old historic island, the mother of soldiers and scholars, whose name was heard in the roar of onset on a thousand battlefields, for whose dear love the poor home-sick exile in the garret or cloister of some foreign city toiled and plotted, and at length hid his weary head and died—the one mother country which a man loves as he loves the mother who held him to her breast. They dreamed, not of becoming Repeal Wardens, but of becoming martyrs and confessors; for, to understand the effect produced by the passion of nationality on an imaginative and aspiring people, we must have recourse less to the history of political factions than to those sublime movements of faith and enthusiasm by which barbarous tribes were transformed into Christian nations. Even the ear of England began to be arrested and her conscience perhaps to be touched. Speaking of the same men a little later, an accomplished English writer exclaimed: "Ireland has at length, after weary and dumb ages of suffering and of wrong, found a voice which speaks to some purpose. Five centuries of pain and injustice plead sternly and eloquently to God and man for redress."[1]

To enforce these new ideas new agents were employed. The leading articles in the *Nation*, it was remarked by a friendly critic, sometimes read like unspoken speeches of Grattan. But the national ballads probably produced the most marvellous results. The imagination of a Celtic race is an appetite almost as imperious as hunger, and in an old bardic land song had always been a common enjoyment of the people. Adepts can determine the date of Irish music by its pervading tone: the airs which have come down from the contests of the Middle Ages sound like a roar of battle choked with sobs, while in the Penal Times they wail with the subdued sorrow of hope long baffled and postponed. Moore had mastered both moods of the national harp, and his songs were sung in the drawing-rooms of Dublin and Cork, and in mansions and presbyteries; but at fairs and markets, at wakes and weddings, in

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[1] *Leeds Times*, presumably Dr Smiles (since author of "Self-Help," "Life of George Stephenson," etc.), who was then Editor.

forges and "shebeens," where the peasants recreated themselves, they were nearly unknown. The songs sung among the people were written originally by Hedge Schoolmasters, and had a tendency to run into classic allusions, and abounded in sonorous and "purple words" without much precise meaning, but which seemed to move the lively imagination of an Irish audience like music. The "Groves of Blarney" is a not very extravagant parody on the Hedge Schoolmasters' songs. The plain and vigorous old "Shan van Vocht," however, and some stray remnants from the Gallic songs of '98, also maintained their ground; and there were everywhere to be met a multitude of rude street songs in honour of O'Connell. The young poets struck a different key. Historical ballads of singular vigour and dramatic power made the great men and great achievements of their race familiar to the people. The longings of the present time and the hopes of a triumphant future were sung in verse where the cataract of coloured words with which they were long familiar were replaced by genuine passion or sometimes by the studiously simple rhetoric of good sense:—

> "The work that should to-day be wrought, defer not till to-morrow,
> The help that should within be sought, scorn from without to borrow.
> Old maxims these, yet stout and true, they speak in trumpet tone
> To do at once what is to do, and trust Ourselves Alone."[1]

While these dangerous novelties excited the alarm of the Irish Government and the wrath of the Tory Press, there was another potentate before whom their reception was doubtful. O'Connell had imposed on his party a discipline which rivalled military or ecclesiastical rule in its strictness. He had jealously reserved to himself the initiative in opinion and action, and maintained it by a constant censorship of the Press. The young men knew this well, and cheerfully accepted him as the leader from whom the word of command and the plan of campaign would emanate. But they, too, were giving their lives to the national cause, and must preserve their individual freedom and self-respect, or the liberty they hoped to win would be only a name. Davis had a profound admiration for O'Connell's ability, and a courteous and watchful consideration for his simplest wishes, far more scrupulous than that of the young men who were Catholics. He would have allowed no personal object to draw him into a controversy with the national leader; but he knew that it was in vain to hope for the help of the Protestant middle classes if nationalists were required to

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[1] *Nation*, No. 8. John O'Hagan.

accept and echo all the individual opinions of O'Connell, some of which were mere personal animosities inherited from the feuds of the Catholic struggle. It was agreed among us that the object for which the *Nation* was established would be unattainable if we did not insist on the right to advocate our individual opinions in our own journal upon all questions not fundamental to the existence of the Repeal party. It was not certain, and seemed scarcely probable at that time, that the *Nation* could exist on these terms; no journal had hitherto maintained itself in the confidence of the people without the support of O'Connell; but it was obvious that for the ends in view it was not worth while maintaining it in existence on other terms.

The contest on this point was not long deferred. The new school of historical literature in France, and the daring politics of the Opposition under Louis Philippe, were made texts for lessons of hope and self-reliance from time to time. In the era of General Hoche and General Bonaparte, France had been the asylum of banished Irish insurgents, and the reproach of belonging to a French party in Ireland meant to imply a party conspiring for a foreign invasion; and though in truth the hope of French assistance had for nearly a generation died out of practical politics or dwindled into a vague tradition, "Boney" was still a pleasant and familiar sound to the ears of an Irish peasant.

The Tory Press immediately raised a clamour that here again was manifestly a "French Party"—a French Party associated with all the mysterious horrors which that phrase suggested to loyal and timid persons. The *Nation* replied that it was as disgraceful to Irishmen to belong to a British party as to a French party; that for their part, the writers of that journal repudiated both factions. But if the charge meant that they desired to make Irishmen familiar with the historical literature of France, which had recently produced Thierry's admirable book upon England and De Beaumont's matchless book upon Ireland; to make Ireland proud of her friendship, intimate with her condition, her history, and her heart, their crime was still greater, for they desired open ports for knowledge and charity between Ireland and all the world, outward and inward, prohibiting only what was immoral or slavish. France had opened her schools and her camps to Irishmen, sent them military aid in their contests for liberty, vindicated Ireland through her great historians and orators; and on the other hand, half a million of Irish soldiers had died in her service; why should Ireland not have friendship with France?[1]

[1] During the time of this French scare Davis wrote to Maddyn:—"The paper

The traditions of the O'Connell agitations, however, were hostile to such sympathy; and Mr John O'Connell took occasion, from the potential tribune of the Corn Exchange, which he occupied in his father's temporary absence, to raise a note of alarm. When the journal was only two months in existence he complained that the *Nation* proposed to increase our intimacy with a country whose first revolution, won by blood and crime, had done more damage to the cause of liberty than any despot. It was a significant symptom of the progress of the new ideas that, instead of silent acquiescence, which used to be the habit, this objection was immediately confronted. A young barrister,[1] who had hitherto been a silent member, replied that these were not the opinions of the Irish people; they had memorable obligations to France which they would not repudiate; and they eagerly desired the aid of her universal language in making their claims familiar to Europe. If Mr John O'Connell's horror of revolutions won by the sword induced him to reject this aid, ought he not, the young orator demanded, on the like ground, reject the dollars of Americans who had won their liberty with the same objectionable instrument?

A more formidable censor soon appeared, however. Before the journal had reached its twentieth number, O'Connell complained from the same tribune that the *Nation* was praising writers not entitled to be praised—men like Dr Maginn, "Father Prout," and Maxwell, who were Tories, while it abstained from the praise of writers like Sam Lover, worthy of applause. O'Connell's *beau ideal* of a literary man was such a one as Lover, who wrote charming songs in his own name, and serviceable party squibs under the rose. But the author of "Handy Andy" and the "Essay on Irish Ballads," who pandered to English prejudice by taking a stage Irishman as his hero, and treating street and stage songs as the authentic ballads of the country, was odious to the young men; and as respects the others they had taught the doctrine that we ought to recognise the genius of Irishmen irrespective of their politics. The editor in the next number defended himself on the express ground that as he had taken some part in the proceedings of

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is selling finely. The authorships this week run thus—'War with Everybody,' by J. F. Murray; 'Reduction of Rents,' and the 'Faugh a Ballagh,' by Duffy; 'Time no Title,' 'The Sketch of Moore,' and 'The Grave,' by myself. . . . The *Mail* says we are at work to establish a French party! They'll say by-and-by we have Hoche's ghost or the National Guard in the back office; but devil may care—

'Foes of Freedom *Faugh a Ballagh.*'"

[1] Andrew Russell Stritch, at that time an occasional correspondent of the *Nation*, but never one of its regular contributors.

the Association at an earlier hour on the same day, it might otherwise seem that he was present and did not maintain his opinion then and there, as he would have been bound to do. He denied that Irish writers were to be refused due applause because they were Tories or because they had assailed O'Connell. "We," he said, "who want to make Ireland a nation ought to be eager to trumpet the fame of all men of genius who share our blood; every one of them affords a new argument why our country should not continue a province!" O'Connell renewed the controversy with some asperity; but the *Nation* respectfully but unequivocally declined to accept his judgment as decisive upon literary questions, or to narrow instead of widening the basis of the national party. This was but a straw on the wind; but at that time the controversy was watched with lively interest.

It was a more perilous experiment when the journalists became critics in their turn. O'Connell, who in Parliament was accustomed to treat his opponents in debate with the deference and courtesy which render criticism effective, sometimes fell foul of them in the Corn Exchange in language of insufferable coarseness. He had adopted this system in the Catholic agitation, to encourage a people long enslaved by abating the inordinate awe which they entertained for official authority. But this policy was singularly unsuitable to a national movement which took conciliation for its motto, and aimed to win the support of all sections of the people. The *Nation* separated itself from this practice almost from the outset. "We dislike," Davis wrote,[1] "the whole system of false disparagement. The Irish people will never be led to act the manly part which liberty requires of them by being told that 'the Duke,' that gallant soldier and most able general, is a screaming coward and doting corporal." The English Chartists at this time were in general Repealers, but Repealers who detested O'Connell. They had accepted as leader Mr Feargus O'Connor, a boisterous Irish barrister, connected by birth with one of the leading men of '98, and who was proud of his hereditary principles. He had been a Repeal member in 1832, and had quarrelled with O'Connell on the method of conducting the agitation, lost his seat in consequence, and, finding himself shut out from an Irish career, had sought an English one. The Chartists embraced his prejudices against O'Connell, and O'Connell returned their aversion and abuse with interest; not from dislike to their principles, for he had been associated with Joseph Hume in framing

[1] *Nation*, No. 34.

the profession of opinion known as the "Charter," from which they derived their name, but from dislike to their leader. Davis, who recognised in the English democracy a growing power, with no interest hostile to ours, and which might become our ally, recommended the Repealers to come to an understanding with the Chartists;[1] making no more account of O'Connell's personal quarrel, where a national object was in view, than he would have made in such a case of any personal feeling or interest of his own.[2]

In another direction a more protracted controversy sprung up. O'Connell was passionately opposed to the Poor-law system, and desired to see it abolished. It was undoubtedly open to serious objections; but it appeared to us that, though the existing law was not wisely planned or generously administered, it was better than the absence of all relief in a country suffering from chronic famine, and where the largest proprietors were absentees. It was, moreover, the sole legislative recognition of the duties and liabilities of property. Dillon accordingly debated and combated O'Connell's opinions from time to time, and insisted that the law ought not to be abolished but amended.

All these controversies and remonstrances were conducted with the most watchful courtesy and forbearance; and the points of difference were insignificant compared to the points of agreement; but O'Connell was little accustomed to criticism within his own party. He had been often shamefully assailed, and often shamefully defended; but a just, discriminating judgment on his policy was so rare as to perplex him. He instructed Mr O'Neil Daunt to inform me that he had been privately warned that the writers of the *Nation* were conspiring against him. He disbelieved the story, he said, but the suspicion would spread if we were

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[1] *Nation*, No. 5 and No. 32.

[2] English Chartism at that time numbered in its ranks several men who have since won a respectable position in art, literature, or the practical business of life. It failed, not because its aims were wholly wrong—most of them have been since accomplished—but because it fell under the control of a man so incompetent for the office of leader as Mr Feargus O'Connor. Mr O'Connor is the hero of a story which deserves to outlive his political achievements. His father, Roger O'Connor, was tried for robbing a mail coach with the assistance of his sons. The object of this adventure was probably to get possession of political documents, but the Government thought proper to treat the adventure as an ordinary highway robbery, and so it came to be considered. More than a dozen years afterwards, Feargus, travelling on a stage coach in a district where he believed himself unknown, amused the passengers by bantering the guard on his age and infirmities. "You are too hard on me, Mr Feargus," said the guard. "Why, my good fellow, you seem to know me." "Of course I do, your honour; why shouldn't I? Sure it was I had charge of the mail *that night.*"

not more cautious. In truth, the writers of the *Nation* were no more conspiring against him than the leaders of a Parliamentary Opposition are conspiring to change the dynasty. They had plans of reform and modifications of policy in view, which they expected to be adopted under the legitimate pressure of opinion, but adopted with the assent of O'Connell. None knew better than they did that it was only on such conditions, in the last resort, that they could be adopted. They loyally accepted his leadership, and constantly taught and practised the duty of discipline, and that in all essentials the leader must lead. But they desired a constitutional, not a despotic, method of government.

In the General Committee, where important business was considered before it was submitted to the Association, the same class of differences arose. The working committee consisted of about twenty members, augmented by the occasional attendance of men of note from the provinces. O'Connell's immediate lieutenants were his son John, O'Neil Daunt, and at rare intervals his eldest son Maurice. Maurice O'Connell in his youth possessed many of the most engaging qualities of a Munster gentleman. He was gay, frank, courageous, fond of enjoyment, with agreeable talents for society, and talents for literature and politics sufficient to be notable. To the first Repeal agitation he had brought a genuine enthusiasm, and he was the darling of the young men of the national party in 1833. With such gifts and attainments he was well qualified to adorn the station to which his father's genius had raised him; and men predicted a happy and successful career for the heir of Darrynane. But an ill-assorted marriage made a total wreck of his home and of his life, and he did not find in public labours the solace for private cares they sometimes afford.

Mr John O'Connell bore slight resemblance either to his father or his brother. When Nature accumulates in a great man the force ordinarily distributed through several generations, she generally recoups herself by a scanty allowance to his immediate successors, and not one of O'Connell's distinguishing qualities was inherited by his favourite son. His figure was insignificant and his capacity mediocre. But he had a steady industry, an easy and not unpleasing address, and a certain subdued sense of humour which is not an uncommon attribute of feeble natures. Had his path lain among the byways of life he might have been happy and perhaps useful. But a public career by the side of his father led him into an error which often betrays ordinary persons who associate habitually with men of powerful will; he believed that he could himself do what he saw daily

done with such careless ease. He was seized with a desire to succeed his father as tribune of the people, without any one of the rare gifts which the great agitator possessed for the office. The ambition of strong and generous natures begets emulation; the ambition of the weak is apt to degenerate into envy; and in Mr John O'Connell envy was the root of many public disasters.

Mr Daunt was allied to O'Connell by sympathy, and followed him cheerfully but not slavishly. He was a country gentleman of a moderate hereditary estate and considerable literary culture. It was said of him by a sarcastic critic[1] that he "built a big Gothic castle and wrote a small controversial novel;" but Daunt replied good-humouredly that it was the novel that was capacious and the castle diminutive, and that he was the author only of the former production. He was a man of practical ability, exact method, and considerable information, and with these qualities, being honest and public-spirited, he would have made an invaluable head of a public department. But in a country where an official career was reserved for Unionists, he was thrown upon literature for the employment of his leisure, and for this pursuit his gifts were less suitable. Mr Daunt was tall and good-looking, with the bearing of a courteous gentleman, but was too cold to be popular, and too much of a utilitarian to be acceptable to enthusiasts.

John Gray,[2] as the conductor of the sole daily paper in the national interest (for the *Morning Register* merged in the *Freeman's Journal* about this time) held a position of influence and authority, and his lively intellect impelled him to take a constant part in the business of the committee. His ancestors were Orangemen transplanted from Ulster to Connaught in the interest of Protestant ascendancy, but he had been a fellow-student with Davis and Dillon in the University, and with Torrens M'Cullagh, who became his brother-in-law, and probably more than either of the others influenced his opinions in the direction they finally took.

All these men, except O'Connell, were in the flush of manhood, but he had beside him also one of his old adherents and comrades of an earlier generation, Tom Steele. When the Catholics were struggling for Emancipation, a young Protestant of Cromwellian descent, whose enthusiasm for liberty led him to volunteer among the Spanish revolutionists under Mina, joined the Catholic Association and became

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[1] Maddyn's "Ireland and Its Rulers."
[2] In later times Sir John Gray and Member of Parliament for the city of Kilkenny.

a steadfast personal adherent of O'Connell. Wherever there was a local despot to be faced or a popular tumult to be quelled, there he insisted was his post. The manner in which he had thrown himself into these services was impressive and dashing, and if it was also a little exaggerated and fantastic, popular audiences do not dislike melodrama. But time had dealt rudely with the aged agitator; he was now sorely dilapidated in mind and body, and peculiarities which were pleasant fopperies in a young man had become ghastly. He wore a faded undress uniform which had once been blue, but had ceased to be of any appreciable colour, and spoke a language which could only be matched in the romances of knight-errantry. O'Connell had named him in sport his "Head Pacificator," and to perform what he supposed to be the functions of this imaginary office was the business of his life. There was a story founded on his idea of pacification which amused Dublin dinner-tables in those days. After his quarrel with Mr Purcell, O'Connell on some occasion expressed his intention of letting bygones be bygones if Purcell would only become a Repealer. "Liberator," exclaimed Steele; "you may forgive him if you think fit, but I solemnly warn you that, as 'Head Pacificator,' I can never forgive him!" Such was Tom Steele in 1842, and it required a lively sense of his former services to listen to him with patience, in a council where the fortunes of a country were at stake, haranguing in language fit for the mouth of Garagantua.[1]

Another personal adherent of O'Connell was a younger and more serviceable man. Thomas Matthew Ray, the Secretary of the Association, possessed remarkable powers of organising and superintending work, and practical ability generally. O'Connell discovered him in the Trades' Political Union, marked his capacity, and transferred him to a place where there was more opportunity for its exercise. He seldom spoke in the Association or its committees, but he possessed a talent rarer in Ireland than the gift of speech—he might be counted upon for seeing done, efficiently and silently, whatever was ordered.

The least reputable of O'Connell's personal staff, and the one whose connection was perhaps most damaging to him, was Richard Barrett,

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[1] A single specimen of his style will probably content the reader: Mr Steele rose and exclaimed—"In the face of earth and heaven, and in the presence of my august friend O'Connell, the moral Regenerator, who has confided to me the sanctified duties of his Head Pacificator, I enter and record my most solemn protest against the doctrine just promulgated by the American gentleman who has now addressed us. . . . Let us always act on the gorgeous principle of O'Connell."—Repeal Association, June 9th, 1843.

editor of the *Pilot*. Mr Barrett was brother of Stanard Barrett who at the beginning of the century had attained some reputation as author of a political satire, "All the Talents,"[1] and a burlesque novel, "The Heroine." Richard, like his brother, began life as a Tory journalist, and distinguished himself by virulence against the Catholics, and especially against priests, but in the end he took service under the Catholic Association. It was in the *Pilot* the public letters of O'Connell first appeared, the majority of them being directly addressed to "My dear Barrett," and it was this preference which alone sustained the journal in a poor and precarious existence. Mr Barrett had considerable ability, and a store of inexact and undigested information. In private he was a genial companion and general "good fellow," but whatever convictions he had at any time held were long extinct, and his word carried no authority with friend or enemy. His newspaper, some one said, was like a torpid viper which awoke only to inflict a wound. When there was no enemy of O'Connell's to chastise it was edited in so random a manner that there sometimes appeared two articles in a number taking contradictory views of the same question. To read the MS. or even the proofs of his contributors was a task for which he had seldom industry; but if the cat-o'-nine-tails was in demand Richard was himself again.[2]

Differences frequently arose in committee on the things proper to be done in promotion of the national cause; but O'Connell in dealing with men of ability and convictions was tolerant of differences. He listened patiently to whatever was discreetly urged, and submitted to an occasional defeat without rancour. It was his ordinary habit to speak late or last, when he could harmonise or correct what went before; a task which he rarely performed in an arrogant or domineering manner. He only made a stubborn stand on questions affecting individuals. A number of old servants of the popular agitations, for example, were employed in paid offices, which were practically sinecures; and the

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1 "On All the Talents vent your venal spleen,
Want your defence, let misery be your screen."
—Byron's "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers."

2 "Do you remember O'Connell at Derrynane telling us the incidents of his first relations with Barrett? B. had written to him several times, proposing to become his adherent; O'Connell for some time took no notice, but at length wrote to say that great statesmen conducted their negotiations by protocols, but, as he was not a great statesman, he preferred doing business face to face. Barrett then called upon him, 'and,' added O'C., 'we soon arranged our affairs.' You, C. G. D. then said, 'And a precious bad bargain you got.' 'Saving your presence,' said Dan, 'devil a worse; but he was of use at the time.'"—Private Note, from John O'Hagan.

young men who had an impatience of whatever looked mean or sordid in the movement, and who refused to use the public funds in any manner themselves, proposed to put them on active duty or cashier them. O'Connell would not suffer this to be done; and though I was of a different opinion at that time, and took part with the reformers, it seems to me now that we were unwisely exacting. Having privately submitted our opinions and wishes to O'Connell, we ought to have allowed the leader to determine such a question at his discretion; and he might well be excused if he decided to protect his old soldiers, even though, like other veterans, they shirked work and were a little given to grog and gossip. The strictness which we exhibited towards them had a disastrous effect; it sowed secret hatred in the minds of men who had constant access to O'Connell, and who could not fail in finding opportunities for making mischief.

In intervals of work O'Connell was always ready for a pleasant gossip on his own achievements and experiences. It was a singular spectacle of self-forgetfulness to see the aged orator, in the midst of a ring of eager young listeners, recounting with bubbling laughter how, under a show of profound deference for the leader, he had, a generation earlier, superseded and reversed the obsolete politics of John Keogh; or describing an interview with Grattan in his old age, and the secret wonder and contempt with which the vigorous young man, entering on life, noted the peculiarities and oddities of what he called a "dilapidated patriot." One of the audience whispered to his comrade as they withdrew: "*Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur.*"

It was in the *Nation* however, not in the Corn Exchange, that the young men did their most effective work. The sudden bursting forth of a vigorous and prolific force in the barren field of Irish journalism puzzled and amazed the veterans of politics. They thought they had taken stock of the available literary power in the country, and could not be persuaded that writings read with such avidity were the work of unknown young men. Before the seventh number, William Carleton[2] found it necessary to ask the formal contradiction of a report which met him everywhere, he said, that he was one of the writers. The contradiction was published in perfect good faith, neither of us foreseeing that in a little while he would find himself irresistibly drawn into the current of national feeling which he was so eager to disavow. A little later a

[1] Author of "Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry." A peasant-born man of a genius kindred to that of Burns.

Belfast journal[1] insisted that Tom Moore was manifestly the author of the dangerous songs appearing weekly in the *Nation*. The Belfast journalist was not a skilful critic, for it is remarkable that though one may here and there detect a borrowed note in those songs, there is no imitation of Moore. His melodies, dating from the unsuccessful insurrection of '98 and the Union, were the wail of a lost cause: while the songs of the *Nation* vibrated with the virile and passionate hopes of a new generation.[2] An unexpected incident raised these suspicions to a paroxysm. O'Connell was so impressed by the new power arrayed on his side that he sent for me, and announced his intention of becoming a contributor to the *Nation*. He wrote anonymously for several weeks a dialogue, which he named a "Repeal Catechism"; and when he suddenly discarded his mask, and announced himself as its author, the belief became a certainty that the trained intellect of the national party was all engaged in this new experiment. In truth, the help from without was at first slight and casual, but Davis's fertility made us independent of help. National ballads constituted a notable feature in the *Belfast Vindicator*, of which I had been editor, and when I originally proposed to introduce the same feature into the *Nation*, Davis assured me he had never published a verse, though, like most men of culture in the progress of self-education, he had written and destroyed reams of paper covered with rhymes. Within a fortnight he brought me the "Death of Owen Roe," his second published poem, which for dramatic power and vigour has scarcely been excelled since the era of the old Scottish ballads; and week after week, for three years, he poured out songs as spontaneously as a bird. Dillon also wrote some verses in furtherance of this experiment, but he did not publish them, and could never be got to renew the attempt. After a little time, however, effectual help came from known and unknown recruits. Of the known writers, Clarence Mangan was the best. The unknown ones were as great a surprise to the founders of the *Nation* as to the public. I can still recall the mixture of delight and alarm with which I read contributions from new correspondents, so striking and effective, so far above the range of Poet's Corner verses,

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[1] *The Belfast News-Letter.*

[2] But Moore was honoured and interpreted to the people as the national poet, and reciprocated our good-will. In January, '43, one of his friends wrote to me, "The sketch of Tom Moore I was successful in obtaining through a friend in Dublin and sent to Moore, whose note in reply, if not a private one, would raise a blush on your editorial face.—E. A. MORAN." Some of the young men were of opinion, however, that Moore got scant justice at our hands; and that his "If and Perhaps" rivals in their own way anything the Young Irelanders ever wrote.

that I was tormented by a suspicion that they must be plagiarisms or adaptations of poems which had escaped my reading. A scratchy school-boy manuscript written on ruled paper, which might easily have repelled an impatient man from further inquiry, proved when deciphered to be Williams's resonant "Munster War Song"; and John Keegan's fine peasant verses came in a handwriting on which the scythe and spade had left their broad mark; and De Jean Fraser's town lyrics in a feminine scrawl which gave little promise at first sight of the vigour and feeling they disclosed. Among other early recruits were a knot of antiquaries, some of whom afterwards rose to great distinction, delighted to see studies which they had pursued in the shade and without sympathy becoming popular.[1] From that time few cultivated young Irishmen went on the Continent without bringing back some offering to this awakened taste; books published by Irish exiles in Paris or Louvain in the penal times, portraits of distinguished Irish soldiers and statesmen who served abroad, or lists of Irish manuscripts in foreign monasteries and colleges, were announced month after month in the *Nation*. Others sent descriptions of churches and colleges founded by Irishmen in France, Belgium, and Italy, or collected traditions concerning the men of our blood who, shut out of their own country by shameful laws, had risen to rule continental States. The effect was marvellous. An eminent Ulster Catholic once told me that he had been so habituated when a boy to see Catholics in a position of dependence that he was amazed to learn at school that Louis XIV. was a Catholic—a king of that denomination was so incredible an anomaly: and these historic recollections produced a corresponding wonder and pride among a generation from whose schoolbooks the name of Ireland had been effaced, and who had been permitted to forget the great men of their race.

With these evidences of successful teaching there came others more unexpected. The French *National* promptly hailed the *Nation* as an ally, and habitually copied its articles on foreign questions. They were copied also into some of the Italian papers, and the bulk of its poetry and prose was reprinted weekly in the great cities of America, from New York to New Orleans. In Paris, after nearly half a century, there was still to be found some of the exiles of '98, who had won renown and fortune under Napoleon. It seemed like the voice of history blessing our work when Miles Byrne, who fought in Wexford, but was

[1] Notably John O'Donovan and Eugene Curry, and later George Petrie.

now *chef de bataillon*, and Arthur O'Connor a French general *en retraite*, but who had relinquished the inheritance of an estate and the prospect of a peerage rather than abandon the United Irishmen, sent thanks and sympathy to the writers of the *Nation*.[1]

The reception of the journal among the cultivated classes, even in circles where O'Connell's name was a challenge to battle, is intelligible; but it was a marvel then, and it is still a marvel, how quickly it seized upon the classes to whom reading was not a necessity. Dillon writing to me early in '43 from Ballaghaderin, a village in Mayo, said: "I am astonished at the success of the *Nation* in this poor place. There is not in Ireland perhaps a village poorer in itself or surrounded by a poorer population. You would not guess how many *Nations* came to it on Sunday last? No less than twenty-three. There are scarcely so many houses in the town, and such houses!" Another friend wrote about the same time: "My calendar for the week dates from the time the *Nation* arrives till the day I may hope for another *Nation*. I often walk three miles to the post-office to bring it home a few hours earlier than it could otherwise reach us." "I work hard all the week," said a Dublin tradesman, "and on Sunday I am repaid by lying in bed an additional hour or two to read the *Nation*." In later years I have met men in the most unexpected positions — Methodist missionaries, British soldiers and judges, professors in Protestant and Catholic colleges, and even Orangemen, who still recall the enthusiasm with which they read the *Nation* in that day.

The Unionists were also served by a vigilant and capable Press. The *Evening Mail*, a journal established under the patronage of Mr Saurin to resist Catholic Emancipation, had been for twenty years their trusted counsellor; and the *Warder*, a weekly paper, had recently, under the management of Mr Le Fanu, who inherited blood and brains from the Sheridans, became a sort of anti-*Nation*.[2] These journals sounded the alarm on every new development of national spirit, and called on the Executive for the suppression of sedition so manifest.

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[1] See "Memoirs of Miles Byrne, *Chef de Bataillon*, Officer of the Legion of Honour," etc., edited by his widow. Paris: Gustave Bossange et Cie, 1863. His widow was sister of Francis Horner, the Edinburgh Reviewer.

[2] Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, afterwards author of several popular novels, and editor of the *Dublin University Magazine*. His best-known books are "The House by the Churchyard," "Uncle Silas," and "Wylder's Hand." He was son of the Dean of Emly, and brother to the Commissioner of Public Works. He had been associated with Mr Butt in Conservative organisation, and, like him, could not altogether resist the mesmerism of the new opinions.

When the *Nation* was founded O'Connell was Lord Mayor of Dublin, and had nearly completed his year of office. Municipal Reform had been at length conceded to Ireland in 1842, and O'Connell was naturally chosen first Mayor under the new law; and the man who was a power in the Empire, and a familiar name in every civilised country in the world, was not a little proud of the distinction. He was the first Catholic indeed who had reached the civic chair of Dublin since the flight of James II., and the red gown and gold chain were trophies of a victory wrested from a monopoly which for one hundred and fifty years had held the metropolis in its grasp. And he knew how to estimate the effect of such a victory; for the people, who had only known official authority as their natural enemy, were charmed to see the mace and sword carried before their leader. The duties of his new office were performed assiduously, but without interrupting his political labours. "His Lordship the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor" was in the Corn Exchange as regularly as in the City Council. When his year of office closed (the testing year, when power had suddenly passed from one political party to another) he received unanimous thanks from the Corporation, which then included some conspicuous and personal antagonists, for his zeal and impartiality. And he left behind him as a permanent monument of liberality a compromise, which after the life and death of a generation is still maintained. It was agreed on his advice that a Catholic and Protestant should alternately occupy the chair which had so long been reserved for bigots of the latter communion, and Mr George Roe, a Protestant Whig, whose heir has since spent a quarter of a million in restoring one of the Dublin Cathedrals, was chosen second Lord Mayor of the Reformed Corporation.[1]

It has sometimes puzzled Englishmen why Ireland, thus reinstated in the control of her cities, did not fall into an ecstasy of gratitude to the Parliament which granted the boon. The same wonder had been expressed before, and has been expressed since in like cases. A distinguished critic has an answer always ready, that Irishmen are never content, and concession only stimulates their greed.[2] Those to whom this

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[1] In Belfast, to which Dublin is sometimes exhorted to look for an example, but half-a-dozen Catholics have been permitted to make their way into the Corporation in eight-and-thirty years — one at a time — and the Mayor has been uniformly a Protestant, and in every case but two a Tory. 1895.—I regret to say that this salutary practice, established by O'Connell in Dublin, was abandoned at the time of the National League.

[2] "The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century," by J. A. Froude.

answer is not altogether satisfactory will be put in the way of understanding the entire class of phenomena in question if they will take the trouble to consider for a moment this particular case. A great wrong had to be redressed, and note the manner in which it was redressed. Since the reign of Queen Anne all the municipalities were in the exclusive possession of Protestants; Catholics had no duties in respect to them except to contribute four-fifths of the rates, and to provide at their sole charge the special contribution called "quarterage." Quarterage was an exaction invented by some cynical corporator to add a new zest to the pleasure of supremacy. It was paid exclusively by Catholics to provide "regalia ensigns and colours"—that is to say, Orange flags and decorations for the different fraternities—to support reduced freemen, and to furnish "anniversary entertainments," at which the charter toast was perdition to Pope and Popery. A Royal Commission, appointed to report on the history and condition of these municipalities, found that in every single instance they had plundered the endowment they were created to administer, and either divided it amicably among themselves, like good comrades, or permitted some paramount patron to make a meal of it. But privileges and patronage remained; they had nearly four thousand offices or employments to bestow, which were generally salaried with the liberality that distinguishes those who are distributing other people's money; and they were uniformly bestowed upon serviceable partisans. They had control over the administration of justice in certain cases, and the management of prisons, and in some instances the power of creating Parliamentary electors. The population of municipal towns in Ireland approached a million, and of this population not more than one in seventy possessed the franchise. Deducting Dublin and the three largest Corporations, more than sixty municipal towns remained with a population of half a million, and of these only one man in a hundred was a municipal voter. There are more electors on the roll of Birmingham at present than existed at that time in all Ireland with a population of eight millions. For four years after the English and Scotch Corporations were reformed, the House of Lords, year after year, refused to reform the Irish Corporations. And now at length having yielded, this is what they did. There were sixty-eight elected Corporations in the hands of the Protestant minority, and with respect to fifty-eight of them, the new law stripped them of their privileges and their property, where any property had escaped plunder, and extinguished them, rather than let them fall into the hands of the majority of the nation. In the English Act, on the other hand, every

chartered town was preserved. The ten Corporations which were not destroyed were effectually maimed. The treatment of Dublin will sufficiently illustrate the system pursued. In England every ratepayer was a burgess, though he only paid a shilling; in Ireland he must inhabit a house rated at £10 under the Poor Law to attain this right. In England the payment of a single tax qualified a man to be on the burgess roll; in Dublin it was necessary to have paid twelve separate local taxes[1] and in some districts more than twelve. The new Corporation created under this restricted and conservative system was deliberately shorn of some of the most important privileges which the old dishonest Corporation enjoyed. The appointment of the Recorder, the sheriffs and the resident magistrates, and the control of the police, were taken from the municipality and transferred to the Government. It was not empowered to light, cleanse, beautify, or keep in order the streets of the city, or to control its port or its public buildings. Its functions consisted in managing the water-supply, making regulations for markets, and in imposing a rate on the citizens to pay a heavy debt inherited from the old Corporation, and to compensate its superannuated officers. This was the boon for which ungrateful Ireland did not fall into ecstasies of gratitude. It must be confessed that she even clamoured for more—which is an awkward habit of claimants who are put off with less than their due.

The *Nation* exhorted the people to use the limited powers conferred upon them so as to shame those who distrusted them; to win recruits to the national cause by excluding sectarian controversy, and to leave Unionists a reasonable share of the representation. The example of the great municipalities in the Netherlands was made familiar to them, and they were encouraged to hope that by acting together they might mass their individual strength into a national public opinion. It is now known beyond controversy that one of the first circumstances which influenced the cultivated classes to consider the possibility of becoming Repealers was the existence of men within the party who jealously maintained their personal independence and taught the doctrines of a wise and ordered liberty.

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[1] These taxes were—1. Poor Rate; 2. Parish Cess; 3. Minister's Money; 4. Grand Jury Cess; 5. Paving and Lighting tax; 6. Wide Street tax; 7. Police tax; 8. Pipe-Water tax; 9. Borough tax; 10. Stephen's green tax; 11. Poodle tax; 12. Cholera tax; 13. Mountjoy Square tax; 14. George's Church tax; 15. Quay Wall tax; 16. Merrion Square tax.

NOTE TO FOLLOW CHAPTER IV.

In former editions of this Book the fifth Chapter consisted of a "Bird's-Eye View of Irish History," from the earliest times down to the establishment of the *Nation*. For various reasons it is not considered necessary to retain this Chapter. It was published because Irish history was so little known; but the study of our history has since become general, and the "Bird's-Eye View" has obtained a very wide circulation. It was inserted in all former Editions of "Young Ireland," of which there have been seven; two in England, two in the United States, one in Australia, and one in Ireland, as well as a French translation in Paris. But, above all, it has been published in a separate volume, and has obtained a large additional circulation in that shape, in which it can still be obtained by those who consider it a useful introduction to the story here told.

CHAPTER V.

THE CORPORATION DEBATE.—THE CASE OF IRELAND.

In the spring of 1843 the country, so long torpid, at length began visibly to move. The Repeal Association was nearly three years in existence, and twenty numbers of the *Nation* had been published and had won an audience for national sentiments among a class who do not mount platforms. Local meetings were held in widely separated districts. The Repeal rent, which did not reach £60 the week the *Nation* issued, had now risen to an average of £300 a week; and contributions came regularly not only from Leinster and Munster, but from the large manufacturing towns in England, and occasionally from America. The centre of public interest began to shift; the proceedings of Parliament were coming to be regarded as of secondary importance, and it was noted that they were often curtailed or omitted from the popular journals to make space for Repeal meetings. O'Connell, who too often mortgaged to-morrow for the benefit of to-day, rashly declared that Eighteen Hundred and Forty-Three should be the "Repeal Year." Catholic Emancipation had been won, with the aid of a great English party, only after a contest spreading over the lifetime of a whole generation; that Repeal should be carried through Parliament in a single session, against the stubborn prejudices which opposed it, was not within the range of moral possibility, and O'Connell sinned against knowledge in presenting such a dazzling hope to a people prone to believe easily whatever they greatly desire. But he laboured with prodigious vigour to give his prediction such chance of success as circumstances permitted.

At the opening of the year, he announced his intention to bring the entire case upon which he relied before the chief representative body in Ireland, the Dublin Corporation. The Corporation at that time included many of the wealthiest and most public-spirited citizens. The then Lord Mayor objected to the introduction of political topics, but as the old Orange Corporation had repeatedly petitioned on the same subject,

and as the new Corporation had already volunteered an opinion on the Afghan war in favour of English policy, his objection was overruled. A day was assigned accordingly for considering the motion of Alderman O'Connell "that a petition should be presented to Parliament from the Corporation of Dublin for the Repeal of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland." When the day approached O'Connell asked a postponement for some temporary convenience, and his opponents affected to believe he was afraid to submit the question to the scrutiny of so competent a tribunal. But they were speedily undeceived; he had planned and was about to achieve a memorable triumph.

On Tuesday, the 25th February, the motion came on for debate. The City Assembly House, a circular building in which the seats were arranged as in the chamber of a continental legislature, was admirably suited for the sittings of a deliberate assembly, but afforded imperfect accommodation for an audience. Strangers were admitted by ticket, and every nook which could hold a man was occupied; even the recess under the canopy which covers the Lord Mayor's chair was as crowded as the body of the house with spectators, chiefly the notable men of both parties.

The debate lasted for three days, and was conducted with uninterrupted fairness and courtesy. O'Connell spoke for the greater part of the first day. In the prime of his manhood he had never made a more masterly or exhaustive statement of a case; but the most amazing feature was its freshness and variety, dealing with a question upon which it might be supposed that nothing short of inspiration could throw new light. As an orator he employed the claws and beak of the eagle with more effect than the wings; he rent an opponent's case to fragments, or pierced the brain of a fallacy with sudden strokes, better than he mounted into the regions of imagination; but there were not wanting on this occasion happy touches of passionate and imaginative eloquence. He brought his youth and age face to face by reading his first public speech—made more than forty years before—when, a young advocate, he rose in the presence of armed soldiers to denounce the project of a Union with England. He recalled the time when Ireland won a constitution by the aid of her citizen soldiers, and the event lost all remoteness and seemed an example sanctioning immediate action when he pointed among the Councillors around him to men who had served under the Irish flag as Volunteers of '82.[1]

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[1] Robert M'Clelland and Cornelius M'Loughlin.

The form of this remarkable speech was skilfully designed to keep alive the interest of his audience, and enable them to receive and remember a long series of facts and arguments. He began by stating the propositions on which he relied to establish his case, and then proceeded to illustrate them successively in detail. No great orator ever depended so much on matter and so little on style. Had his case for an Irish Parliament been subjected to the careful pruning to which a literary artist submits his work, there would have remained a masterpiece of persuasive oratory almost worthy to take its place with the orations against Philip and Catiline.

Ireland was fit for legislative independence, he insisted, in position, population, and natural advantages. Five independent kingdoms in Europe possessed less territory or people; and her station in the Atlantic between the old world and the new designed her to be the *entrepot* of both, if the watchful jealousy of England had not rendered her natural advantages nugatory.

She was entitled to legislative independence; this was his second proposition. The Parliament of Ireland was as ancient as the Parliament of England, and had not derived its existence from any charter of the British Crown, but sprung out of the natural rights of freemen. Its independence long claimed was finally recognised and confirmed by solemn compact between the two nations in 1782. That compact had since been shamefully violated indeed, but no statute of limitation ran against the rights of a nation.

Self-government had not been an idle toy, but an efficient weapon in the hands of Ireland. After '82 her commerce was extended, her manufactures fostered, wages rose, and the value of land increased. The bankers and merchants of Dublin, naturally a cautious and conservative class, declared in petitions against the Union that the prosperity of the kingdom had wonderfully grown under the care of a native Parliament. But statistics spoke with more stringent force. During the period of parliamentary independence, while the use of tea increased forty-five per cent. in England, it increased eighty-four per cent. in Ireland; the use of wine increased in England twenty-two per cent., in Ireland seventy-five per cent.; coffee increased in England seventy-nine per cent., in Ireland six hundred per cent.; and so of the other taxable articles, the consumption of which measures the rise of prosperity. After the Union the proportions were reversed; in some cases, notwithstanding the growth of population, an actual decrease of consumption followed the loss of independence.

Having supported these introductory propositions with persuasive facts and illustrations, he approached the marrow of the case, and expressly denied in the name of constitutional law and public faith that the Union was a compact which the Irish Parliament was entitled to make or which was binding on the Irish people. The ordinary principles of delegated authority ruled this case.

Locke, the apostle of the Revolution of 1688, distinctly declares that "a

legislature cannot transfer the power of making laws into other hands, for, being but a delegated power from the people, they who have it cannot pass it over to others." Plunket, a great lawyer not less than a great orator, warned the Irish Parliament that they had no power to invalidate the Irish Constitution, and, if they presumed to lay hands on it, no man would be bound to obey them. This was the doctrine under which the House of Hanover derived its title to reign. George III. could not transfer his crown to the King of Spain: the Parliament of Ireland could not transfer its legislative franchise to the Council of Five Hundred in Paris or to the House of Commons in London. "They could abdicate their own functions, and extinguish themselves, but Parliament they could not extinguish; as well might the frantic suicide hope that the act which destroyed his miserable body would extinguish his eternal soul." English history supplied significant examples of this constitutional principle. Cromwell abolished the monarchy and the House of Lords; was it necessary to revive either by Act of Parliament? No; the inherent spirit of the constitution recalled it into existence. He abolished the House of Commons, but when Charles II. returned the House of Commons revived as a matter of right. The Irish Parliament also was not dead, but only slept, and they were that day sounding the trumpet of its resurrection.

On the second branch of the proposition, that the compact made by Parliament was not binding on the country, he made a case of specific fraud and coercion sufficient, he contended, to invalidate an indenture before a court of law. The Union was carried by profligate corruption and naked intimidation. The Irish people were not free agents, and an instrument executed when a party is in *duresse* is void. An insurrection had just been put down with ferocious cruelty, the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, Courts Martial were sitting before which the common law was no protection. It was while the people were thus prostrate and gagged that the Union was carried. Within the Parliament a majority was bought and paid for. Over a million sterling was spent in secret *douceurs;* and a million and a quarter openly in buying the interest which patrons were supposed to possess in the right of boroughs to representation. In the army, in the navy, in the Customs, patronage was distributed as bribes. Those who preferred money down got a sum of £8000 for a vote, but an office of £2000 a year was not considered too high an equivalent. No less than twenty peerages, ten bishoprics, one Chief Justiceship, and six puisne Judgeships were given to men who voted for the Union. It might be asked, Why did not the Irish people resist these iniquities? How could they resist? When the Sheriff of the Queen's County called a meeting of his bailiwick to petition against the Union, the meeting was scattered by the military. The Sheriff of Tipperary convoked the freeholders of that great county to deliberate on the question, and the meeting was dispersed at the point of the bayonet. Whatever could be done under these circumstances had been done. Twenty-seven counties out of thirty-two signed and sent to Parliament petitions against the measure. The petition from the County Down was signed by 17,000 persons, while the counter petition only obtained 415 signatures. And so in other counties. There were upwards of 700,000 petitioners against the Union, including the leading men of the nation; the petitioners in favour of it did not exceed 3000, and some of them only asked that the question might be discussed.

These facts were not new to his audience, but the skill and passion

of the orator invested them with the charm of novelty. The effect was immediate; it began to be asked among men who had hitherto stood aloof whether a compact so obtained could stand, and whether Unionists, who admitted the iniquity of those transactions but contended that they ought not now to be called in question, were not like the receiver of stolen property, as bad as the original thief?

"Who now defends, would then have done, the deed."

The next branch of the case received a more sober and well-informed assent. The Union, he contended, had produced the most disastrous results in Ireland. It robbed the people of their constitutional right to maintain a control over the conduct of the judiciary and the executive. It robbed them also through the tax-gatherer by imposing an inordinate share of the public burthen on Ireland. It forced them to submit to an imperfect representation in the House of Commons, to inadequate powers in the corporations which ruled their cities, and to see the public employments, paid by their money, given to Englishmen and Scotchmen. The failure of trade, manufactures, and commerce since the Union was so familiar to his audience that he refrained from illustrating it by statistics; factories had been shut up in all the great towns, and little was now exported beyond raw produce upon which no skilled industry had found employment.

On the method by which he proposed to repeal the Union he was less explicit or satisfactory, and mixed his gold too obviously with clay. If Plunket was right, if Locke was right, if Saurin was right, the Irish Parliament existed at that moment, though in abeyance, and could be called into activity by the Queen's writ. But this was putting an extreme case; if the Irish people were unanimous, the Imperial Parliament would yield to their demand and repeal the statute.

He encountered with perfect frankness the objections with which the proposal of reviving the Irish Parliament had been commonly assailed; and this part of the case will not bear the close compression to which I have subjected the rest.

It was said an Irish Parliament would lead to a Catholic ascendancy. What evidence had the Irish Catholics ever given of desiring ascendancy? Since the Reformation they had been three times restored to power, and it was admitted by Protestant historians that they had never persecuted a single individual. In an Irish Parliament nine-tenths or nineteen-twentieths of the peers would be Protestants, and a large body of the Commons. Had the Catholics of Ireland shown any indisposition to elect Protestant representatives? Notoriously they did not. The age of persecution was gone

by. Look at Belgium, where the savage Alva slaughtered the Protestants, and the equally sanguinary Desonoy and Vandermere slaughtered the Catholics; now with four millions of Catholics and less than a quarter of a million of Protestants they had established the most perfect religious equality. In the Parliament of Belgium there were four priests, and when the Minister of Public Works proposed to grant a public building for a Protestant place of worship, it was carried by a majority of forty to four, and three of the four priests voted in the majority. Another argument employed against Repeal was that an Irish Parliament would seek to reappropriate the revenues of the Established Church. He avowed it, but they would respect vested rights; they claimed only the reversion, and to employ it in the interests of the poor and the ignorant for public education. Another objection was the clashing of the English and Irish Parliaments on the Regency question during the insanity of George III. In truth, the English Parliament gave the crown to Pitt, the Irish Parliament gave it to the legal heir. But this difficulty could be evaded. The principle of the law is that whoever is king in England *de facto* is king in Ireland *de jure;* an extension of this law might make the Regent *de facto* in England Regent *de jure* in Ireland.

The peroration of this skilful and exhaustive speech was a direct appeal to the interest which his audience and the whole country had in seconding his exertions.

"Let me ask you," he said, "do you know any country that has submitted to slavery which has not accepted poverty along with it; and do you know any country which has risen to liberty without achieving prosperity at the same time? Look to the United States of America, look to Venice, to Switzerland, to Belgium. Belgium was the other day a pitiful province of Holland, taxed beyond her strength; now she is a prosperous nation. Again, look to Norway. Though Norway was overloaded with a disproportionate share of taxation by Sweden, the native Parliament have succeeded in paying off every penny of the public debt. Though a barren and sterile land, frozen in winter and scorched in summer, it has, through the fostering care of a domestic Parliament, acquired a degree of prosperity never before known amongst its hardy population. Oh! how different from our lovely country, beautiful in the exquisite variety of her scenery—in the loveliness of her green valleys—in the luxuriant fertility of her plains—in the magnificence of her lofty mountains—in the multitude of her ever-flowing streams capable of turning the machinery of the world! Yes, ours is a country for a man to delight in, and for superior beings to smile upon, whilst her people are foremost in every physical and social quality, temperate, moral, religious, hospitable, and brave. Yes, that people shall be what they ought to be. The star of liberty shall beam above them. The blessing of self-government and self-legislation shall

be revived amongst them. Their allegiance to the throne is pure and unbroken, but their love of liberty is unextinguishable and unconquerable."

The burthen of the reply was thrown on Mr Isaac Butt, a favourite leader of the young Conservatives. Little over thirty years of age, he had won a position at the Bar which gave promise of the remarkable success as an advocate which he subsequently attained. He was also disciplined in literature and politics. He had been a professor in the Dublin University and editor of the *University Magazine*, and of a Tory newspaper in Belfast; and before the Reform of the Dublin Corporation he had led the extreme wing of the opposition on behalf of the old Protestant Ascendancy; and when the change at length came, he entered the new Corporation to watch over the interests of his party. His figure was above the middle size and well proportioned; his face, which, if it had not been lighted up with *bonhommie*, would have been plain, was winning and agreeable from its prevailing expression; and he had an impregnable temper. The impression made upon me at the time was that he felt the force of the case made on behalf of an ancient realm, and staggered under it. His reply was not an oratorical success, and was quite inadequate as an answer to a statement so large and exhaustive as that which he had to encounter; but it was marked by broad and candid admissions very grateful to the national ear, and enlivened by retorts on O'Connell, sometimes of poignant force.

He had no fear of Catholic Ascendancy in a revived Parliament, and he acknowledged that Repeal was practicable; but he besought the people to consider the bitter price at which it must be purchased. He reminded the Irish tribune that his claims were for Anglo-Saxon rights; that he founded the liberties of Ireland upon the English conquest and the subversion of the ancient Brehon laws. He twitted him with having evaded a statement, which it was surely material that he should make, whether the legislative independence he sought was to consist of a revival of the Constitution of '82, or to be something beyond and inconsistent with that settlement.

"What, indeed, was the real character of the legislative power entrusted to Irish Parliaments? Originally it was a shadow. In the reign of Henry VII. Lord Justice Poynings obtained an Act from a Parliament sitting at Drogheda under which future Parliaments could entertain no measure which had not received the preliminary sanction of the English Privy Council. By the 6th George I. the English Parliament directly

I remain my dear Duffy
Yours very sincerely
Isaac Butt

Mr. ISAAC BUTT, M.P.

claimed and declared the right of binding Ireland by its laws. No doubt in 1782 the Irish Parliament passed their celebrated Declaration of Rights, and the English Parliament repealed the Act of the 6th George I., and renounced their claim to make laws for Ireland; but the Irish Parliament, while they modified, did not repeal the Act of Poynings. The modification consisted in this, that they might originate and pass Bills without the previous consent of the English Privy Council; but he prayed the country to mark, that, to become law, the Bills so passed required the assent of the Sovereign under the Great Seal, not of Ireland but of England. Now the Great Seal of England was in the custody of the English Lord Chancellor, a Minister responsible to the Parliament of England and not responsible to the Parliament of Ireland. Was such a Constitution entitled to be designated national independence? Under the Constitution of '82 there was no Irish Ministry. Repeal the Union and who were to be our Executive? Were we to have a Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary appointed by an English Ministry as in '82? The Sovereign had the exclusive right of declaring war; but by whose advice should she act? If we revived the Constitution of '82, she would act by the advice of the English Ministry. Ireland might be dragged into a war of which the whole Irish people disapproved. Then again where would be her navy, her army, her ambassadors to Foreign States, her colonies? Nowhere. This was indeed to make Ireland a province, bound by imperial policy, without any right or power to control it."

Mr Butt unfortunately omitted to indicate where the army and navy of Ireland were to be found under the existing system; what means she possessed of forbidding a war to which the whole Irish people were opposed; or whereabouts the Colonies lay, over which she exercised any more control than over the movement of the planets.

From constitutional objections he proceeded to consider practical difficulties. How was it proposed to carry Repeal? and if it were carried, what was the precise value of the securities tendered by Mr O'Connell to satisfy the classes opposed to the change? Here the young orator was supposed to have made his most successful stand; his critics little foreseeing that a few revolving years would see accomplished nearly all the reforms he pronounced inadmissible and impossible.

"Mr O'Connell had spoken of the House of Lords as a protection for the Protestant minority, but was he sincere in thus speaking? Did he forget that not seven years ago he had gone on a crusade through

England denouncing Englishmen as slaves if they submitted to the continuance of a House of Lords? Did he intend Irishmen to be slaves? If he intended to preserve a House of Lords in his scheme, there were measures demanded by him to which no House of Lords would ever assent. The objects of the Repeal Association were declared to be the abolition of tithes, the establishment of a fixed tenure for the occupiers of land, manhood suffrage, vote by ballot, limitation of Parliament to three years' duration, the equalisation of electoral districts, and the abolition of the property qualification for members. Thus Repeal was Revolution. It was not a proposal to return to any state of things which had previously existed in Ireland, nor to adopt the constitution of any European State, but to enter on an untried and wild system of democracy.

Suppose Repeal were admissible, how was it to be carried into law? Two methods were proposed; one that the Queen should come over in person and issue the writs for an Irish Parliament. But on whose advice was the constitutional Sovereign to act? The other method was that the Imperial Parliament would pass an act repealing the Union. But how could we compel them to pass such an act without physical force? He exhorted the Catholics of Ireland, who had been restored to equal rights, to prove themselves worthy of them by pursuing attainable ends by legitimate methods."[1]

The discussion was maintained with considerable spirit during the two succeeding days. Merchants and traders who had known Dublin in her era of prosperity spoke of the time when the commercial navy of Russia, of the United States, of Prussia, Sweden, and Denmark were seen in her docks, representing a large foreign trade; now there was not one foreign ship in the bay or in the river. So late as twenty years ago there were five-and-twenty mills on the Dodder alone, employing five thousand persons in the manufacture of iron, paper, and woollen and cotton goods; now nearly all were gone. Prosperity had vanished with legislative independence.

The opposition did not contest any of these statements; a native Parliament, it was conceded, would be a great gain, but England would

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[1] I was present during this debate at the speeches of O'Connell and Mr Butt, and described them immediately afterwards in the *Nation* in terms of which I have somewhat availed myself here. Mr Mitchell in one of his books quotes a portion of the article in question, and attributes it to Thomas Davis; but at that time Mr Mitchell had no connection with the *Nation*, or acquaintance with its internal affairs.

never grant it, and to stimulate the people to desire it was an experiment which might issue in civil war. The upshot of their argument was, that Ireland was handcuffed to a partner so selfish and cruel, that to insist on fair treatment would lead to murder. In the language of Plunket, "England had wooed, had won, had wedded her; but was nowise prepared to grant her the rights and privileges of a wife"—she had better therefore give Heaven thanks and be content. One debater, however, Mr Purcell, the same who had abandoned the Precursor Society, hit a palpable blot. "You propose," he said, "to unite in your Association all Irishmen who desire a domestic legislature, but you will not admit as a member any one who does not make a profession of faith in accordance with yours, upon some of the most debatable principles in politics—on the tenure of land, parliamentary franchise, the ballot, and the disposal of the revenues of the Established Church. This is not a national but a party organisation." On a division the motion was supported by forty-five members and opposed by fifteen. Davis asked triumphantly in the *Nation* if the Dublin Corporation could discuss so momentous a question with knowledge, courtesy, and independence, what were we to think of those people who pictured an Irish Senate House as an arena for savage faction to be adjourned to the battlefield?[1]

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[1] Davis wrote to Maddyn respecting this debate—"I 'know' that much good has already followed from the explanations, the good temper, arguments, and concessions which came out during the discussion. O'Connell's two speeches were greatly superior in style and argument to those in St Stephen's in 1834. I sat out the whole affair. Staunton's was the next in real worth. His statistics were mature and unanswerable. Butt was very clever, very fluent, and very ignorant. I feared the debate would do mischief from the strength and contagion of the opposition. I fear it not now. O'Connell's book ('Memoirs of Ireland, Native and Saxon') is miserable in style, but popular in plan, and highly useful. Irish History 'must' be read henceforth."—*March* 3, 1843.

CHAPTER VI.

THE AWAKENING OF THE COUNTRY—THE MENACE OF THE GOVERNMENT—THE ANSWER OF THE PEOPLE.

It is difficult at this distance of time to comprehend the profound impression created by the Corporation debate; but from that day forth the "agitation" so long derided began to assume the spirit and proportions of a national movement. Sections of the middle class hitherto hostile or indifferent admitted that the demand for a national legislature was after all demonstrably just, and that being just it ought somehow to be practicable. The most courageous acted on this opinion, and within three weeks more men of social or political mark joined the organisation than in the three preceding years.

At its next meeting the Association was crowded to overflowing by a triumphant audience, and O'Connell spoke on this occasion with a vigour of language and a liberality of sentiment worthy of a national leader. To meet the objection urged in the late debate, a resolution was adopted opening the Association to all friends of a native parliament without reference to their opinions on any other public measure. The fairness which the Unionists had exhibited was frankly acknowledged, and arguing from this fact he insisted with unaccustomed emphasis on the necessity for satisfying and conciliating opponents.

The chair was taken on this occasion by James Haughton, a Unitarian philanthropist, and a prosperous merchant of a class rarely seen in the Corn Exchange since Emancipation. Lord Ffrench, a Catholic peer, and his sons volunteered to become members, and when it became known that the heir of a Protestant Anglo-Norman house, long accustomed to stand in the front of the nation in public difficulties, meditated taking the same course, it seemed to the excited imagination of the people that they were only the advance-guard of their order. A little later the O'Connor Don, lineal heir of the last Celtic King of Ireland, joined the movement. And with recruits of rank came recruits of wealth and enterprise. The prosperous merchants of Cork declared

themselves Repealers, in language which made a grave impression throughout the province where their character and position were best understood. The Repeal Rent, which was watched by friends and enemies like a barometer before a fête-day, proved how widely the people shared the new enthusiasm; it shot up from £239 the week after the debate to £683 by the beginning of May, an amount twice as great as the Catholic rent attained the year before Emancipation. Some of the provincial municipalities immediately adopted the resolutions of the Dublin Corporation, and before many weeks they were accepted in turn by nearly every municipal body in three provinces. At the same time a handful of Ulster Protestants joined the Association; among them I proposed a young solicitor from the village of Banbridge, whose name attracted no attention at that time, but was destined later to attract attention without stint—Mr John Mitchel.

These were sure evidences of a deep and widespread change of sentiment, but a more significant evidence remains to be mentioned. During three years only one Catholic bishop had answered O'Connell's appeal. At the first meeting after the debate the Bishops of Meath and Dromore became members, and immediately afterwards Archbishop MacHale, a man of robust intellect and fearless character, much distrusted among British statesmen,[1] joined at the head of a hundred of his priests. Dr Higgins, the Bishop of Ardagh, who under different culture and con-

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[1] Lord Palmerston, writing to his brother, May the 12th, 1834, says:—"I am sending off a messenger suddenly to Florence and to Rome, to try to get the Pope not to appoint an agitating prelate Archbishop of Tuam, and I write a few lines by him to you, as he may as well go on to Naples from Rome when the Pope is pondering upon his answer."—Mr Evelyn Ashley's "Life of Lord Palmerston." We get a curious light on the same transaction from another source. "He (Lord Melbourne) told me that 'an application had been made to the Pope very lately (through Seymour) expressive of the particular wish of the British Government that he would not appoint MacHale to the vacant Catholic bishopric, anybody but him,' notwithstanding which the Pope had appointed MacHale. His Holiness said that 'he had remarked for a long time past that no piece of preferment of any value ever fell vacant in Ireland that he did not get an application from the British Government asking for the appointment.' Lord Melbourne supposed he was determined to show that he had the power of refusing and of opposing the wishes of Government, and in reply to my question he admitted that the Pope had generally conferred the appointment according to the wishes of Government. Can anything be more absurd or anomalous than such relations as these? The law prohibits any intercourse with Rome, and the Government, whose business it is to enforce the law, has established a regular but underhand intercourse through the medium of a diplomatic agent, whose character cannot be avowed, and the Ministers of this Protestant kingdom are continually soliciting the Pope to confer appointments, the validity, even the existence, of which they do not recognise, while the Pope, who is the object of our orthodox abhorrence and dread, good-humouredly complied with all, or nearly all, of their requests."—"Grenville's Memoirs."

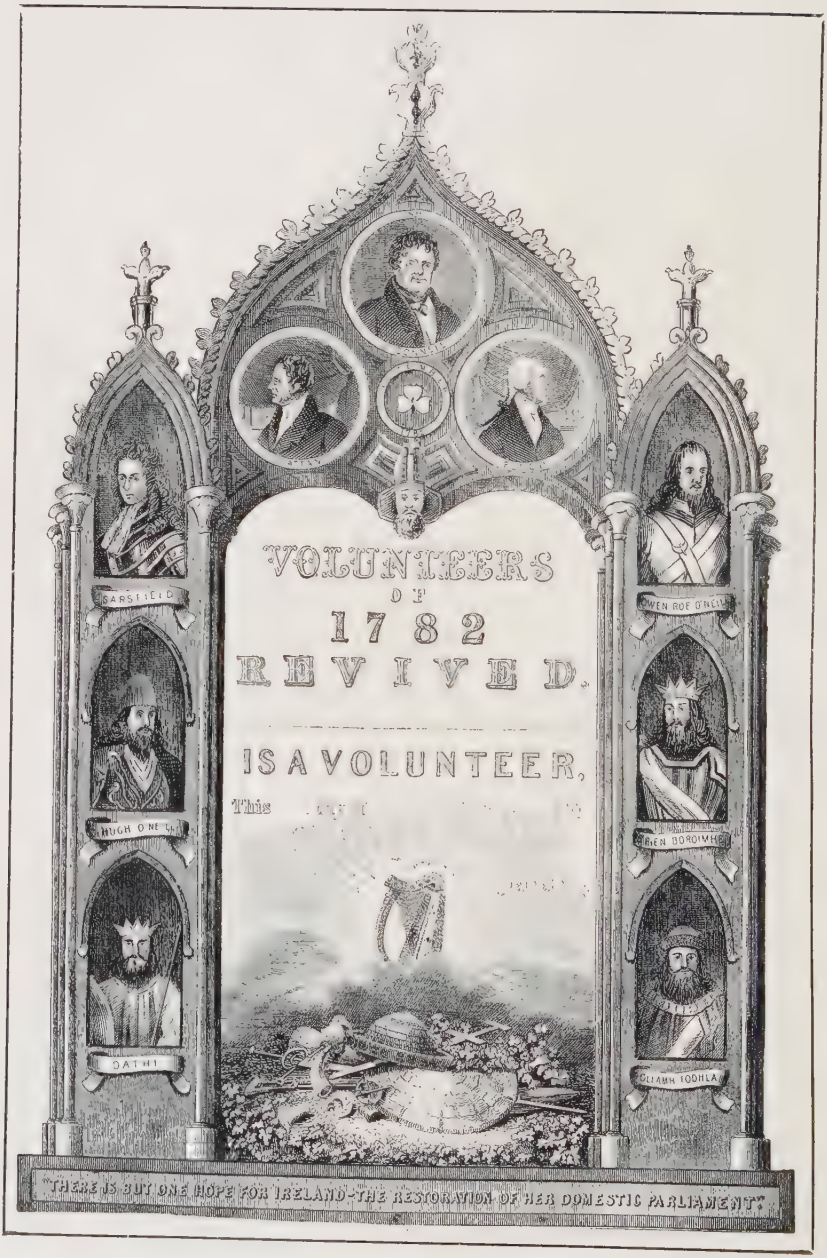
ditions would have made a dashing soldier—another Heber MacMahon, men said—followed up this stroke by a still more impressive one; at a Repeal banquet at Meath he announced the approaching adhesion of the entire Catholic episcopacy. "I have reason to believe," he said—"I may say I know," he immediately added, "that every Catholic Bishop in Ireland without exception is an ardent Repealer." The fact was not quite so. Dr Murray, the Archbishop of Dublin, took occasion to declare that for his part he had not authorised this announcement, and there were other Bishops who either distrusted O'Connell or distrusted the chances of success. But it was no longer doubtful that the great body of the Catholic prelates, men prudent by temperament and training, and by the responsibilities of their position, were prepared to co-operate with the Association.

The General Committee—the Privy Council of the movement—took measures to swell this success and to turn it to practical account. O'Connell announced the intention of holding a public meeting in every county in Ireland in turn; and preparations for county meetings commenced forthwith in Leinster and Munster. The correspondence and general business of the Association so prodigiously increased that he thought fit to mark the measure of its growth by holding two meetings in the week instead of one. The movement had already outgrown the Corn Exchange, the cradle of the Catholic Association; and the foundations of a new building capable of accommodating the increased audience were laid with great ceremony, and in honour of the new spirit of fraternity it was agreed to name it Conciliation Hall. It was proposed to recall the Irish members from the House of Commons with the view of engaging them in the more important work about to be done in Ireland. Some members who acted on this suggestion and abandoned London were stigmatised by the *Times* as "absentees," but the *Nation* rejoined that "absentee" was scarcely an appropriate nickname to bestow upon persons who stayed at home.[1]

Davis and his friends bore to O'Connell in these transactions the

[1] "Conciliation Hall." O'Connell had a strange incapacity for inventing attractive titles for his popular organisations. One was called by the bald name of the Anti-Tory Association, another the General Association, a third the Reform Registry Association, and a fourth the Precursor Society, meaning that it was the precursor of his last resource—Repeal of the Union. But the subtle idea quite escaped the people, who were only puzzled by the unfamiliar word. There was a story current in those days that an English traveller having asked a Dublin car-driver what was the object of the Precursor Society, the boy, who was never to be caught without his answer, replied: "Pray-curse-sir! why, to pray curses on the inimies of Ireland, to be sure!"

REPEAL CARDS.—No. 1.



relation the permanent staff of a public department bear to a Minister. They took little part in the public meetings, but they were at work incessantly in the General Committee, and in a hundred silent places, organising the work to be done. Whatever appealed to the imagination or feelings in the management of the cause, or aimed to give it the form and dignity of a national movement, instead of the traditional hobble of political agitation, or was designed to educate and discipline the people, may be attributed to them, with the same certainty that the main policy may be attributed to O'Connell; and from this time such proposals multiplied. In order that the county meetings might help to revive the forgotten facts of Irish history in the public mind, it was determined to hold them as far as practicable on the sites of great historical transactions. When the independence of Belgium was recognised, William IV., in a speech from the throne, had been instructed to pronounce that "it is the undoubted right of every people to manage their own affairs." This maxim of State policy was disinterred from "Hansard," and painted on the walls of Conciliation Hall. The *Morning Chronicle* had recently declared that "a population of nine millions was too great to be dragged at the tail of another nation," and a similar use was made of this significant admission. The cards of membership for all O'Connell's associations had been as bare of sentiment as the price list of a commercial traveller; under the influence of the young poets new cards were issued which became a sort of diploma of political rank, and blossomed into poetry and history. Associates, Members, and Volunteers constituted separate classes in the Repeal organisation gradually rising in importance, and for each there was a separate card, designed to teach a special lesson. The member's card was adorned with the ancient national flag, "The Sunburst," and a modern flag displaying a shamrock inscribed "Catholic, Protestant, and Dissenter," on leaves issuing from a common stalk. On each corner of the card was printed the name of a great battle won by the Irish, with the date of the event. At the top was set forth the declaration of the Dungannon Convention that only the Lords, Commons, and Sovereign of Ireland were entitled to legislate for the country; and at the foot the dictum of Saurin, afterwards for twenty years Irish Attorney-General—that the Union was not binding on conscience. To the right and left were columns bearing inscriptions specifying the area and resources of Ireland, and enumerating the free States which were inferior to her in wealth, population, and territory, and ending with a refrain, very natural under the circumstances, but

which afterwards became the subject of grave judicial rebuke—"And yet she has no Parliament." The associate's card contained more elementary teaching, and the volunteer's was embellished with portraits of great soldiers and statesmen; but the aim of all was alike—"to create and foster public opinion and make it racy of the soil."

To the bulk of the Protestant population who had reached manhood these transactions were offensive and disquieting. The ordinary middle-aged, middle-class gentleman regarded the hopes of the nation as something little short of madness and blasphemy. The Union was not an Act of Parliament in his eyes, but the very covenant of his race; the guarantee of an ascendancy in Church and State which had been discredited in its title indeed by the Act of Emancipation, but of which he and his were still in nearly undisturbed enjoyment. The landed proprietors were uneasy with the alarm of a bad conscience, for their feudal exactions would probably not long survive any awakening of the people; and Protestants of the industrious classes had been successfully trained to believe that high rents and an uncertain tenure were essential parts of the system which saved them from "Pope and Popery," brass money, and wooden shoes. Among the exceptional minority who believe to-day what the majority will believe to-morrow, and among young professional men and the students in the University and in provincial schools, the new opinions had made progress, but it was a progress not yet visible or tangible. The general feeling of the Protestant population was impatience and irritation. There was a distrust of Peel, who had betrayed Protestant ascendancy, almost commensurate with the fear and hatred of O'Connell who had so successfully assailed it.

The Government were expected to do something to satisfy this uneasy feeling, but as week followed week they made no sign, and the gentry became impatient. At length Mr Lefroy, member for the University, a barrister in good practice, but a partisan of prejudices so violent that he was said to hold that George IV. had forfeited the throne by assenting to Catholic Emancipation, was put forward to question them. He inquired in the House of Commons whether the Government considered the meetings held in Ireland, confessedly to procure a repeal of the Union, were legal meetings; and if not whether any means for their prevention were contemplated? Lord Eliot, then Chief Secretary, declined to state the intentions of the Government. But Mr Lefroy's zeal did not offend the Administration; he was shortly afterwards transplanted to the Irish bench, and long continued to

LEGISLATIVE INDEPENDENCE OF IRELAND 1782.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN

DISABILITIES OF DISSENTERS REMOVED 1828.

There are in Europe only six States having a larger Population & revenue than Ireland. They are France, Russia, Austria, England, Prussia, and Spain.

There are sixteen independent States in Europe having less Population and revenue than Ireland. They are Naples, Sardinia, Bavaria, Belgium, Portugal, Sweden, Holland, the Papedom, Switzerland, Denmark, Hanover, Saxony, Wurtemberg, Tuscany, Sardinia, Greece, not reckoning several minor states in Germany.

Hungary, Norway, each of the United States of America, have their Parliament.

BUT IRELAND HAS NOT A PARLIAMENT.

Loyal National

CATHOLIC DISSENTER LOUIS SEURRAUT PROTESTANT

REPEAL ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

IT WAS AND SHALL BE

Thomas Davis Esq paid £1 Rent subn 13th June 1845 admitted a Member of the Association the 17th day of April 1844

Thos Mat. Ray Secretary

The population of Ireland was in 1841, 8,175,124.

Its surface covers 20,808,257 statute Acres

Its annual revenue exclusive of uncredited taxation averages about £8,500,000.

Its Local taxation exceeds £2,000,000 per annum.

It possesses in its natural resources in its fine Harbours and in its advantageous position capabilities for a vast commerce.

Its people are intelligent, temperate, laborious and brave.

Yet its Agriculture languishes its trade is paralysed, its mineral resources are unproductive. Its fisheries are neglected, it is stripped of a large portion of its revenue of its rents & of its capital. Its population is daily & imperceptibly

BECAUSE IRELAND HAS NOT A PARLIAMENT.

CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION 1829

DOMESTIC LEGISLATION will be obtained by PEACE & PERSEVERANCE

3919

REPEAL

No. 3.

NOTE.—No. 2 is a reduced copy of Thomas Davis's card of membership, and contains a record of the date when he first joined the Repeal Association.

expound his theory of constitutional law and public rights to complaisant juries of Castle tradesmen. As the national movement still spread, the alarm of the Irish proprietors increased, and at length they insisted on an explicit assurance from the Government. After some private negotiations Sir Robert Peel consented to gratify them. On the 9th May Lord Roden, Grand Master of the Orangemen, in one House of Parliament, and his eldest son in the other, demanded of Ministers whether they intended to take any measure to suppress Repeal meetings and to maintain the Legislative Union.

The Duke of Wellington answered somewhat vaguely. It would be the duty of Her Majesty's servants, he said, to take every measure in their power that could tend to maintain the Union, and prevent any disturbance likely to break the peace of the country. And he read, as the standard of their duty, the address adopted by the Parliament of 1834, declaring their fixed determination to maintain the connection unimpaired.

But Sir Robert Peel was not vague. It was necessary to allay the personal suspicions of his Irish supporters, and he spoke with unusual plainness, and with a tone of menace new and strange in the mouth of a man ordinarily so circumspect. "Her Majesty's Government," he said, "in this country and in Ireland are fully alive to the evils which arise from the existing agitation; and there is no influence, no power, no authority which the prerogatives of the Crown and the existing law give to the Government which shall not be exercised for the purpose of maintaining the Union, the dissolution of which would involve not merely the repeal of an Act of Parliament but the dismemberment of this great empire." He then went on to announce that while he would trust as long as possible to the existing law, he would not hesitate to ask new powers from Parliament if it became necessary. His peroration was a direct and specific threat of force. "I am prepared to make the declaration which was made, and nobly made, by my predecessor, Lord Althorp, that, deprecating as I do all war, but, above all, civil war, yet there is no alternative which I do not think preferable to the dismemberment of this empire."

This decisive declaration reached Dublin on the morning of a day when the Repeal Association held one of its ordinary meetings, and O'Connell had at once to confront the difficulty. He complained with just indignation that the Prime Minister put Ireland outside the Constitution.

He had in terms announced that if the nation became convinced that

every article in the treaty of Union was violated, convinced that the connection between the countries, as Lord Byron said, resembled that between the shark and his prey, still they were to have no voice in determining its duration. If the Union proved injurious or even inconvenient to England, would its repeal be a forbidden question? Sir Robert Peel talked of new powers of coercion; if he wanted new powers he would find a model in an act passed by the slave-owners of Columbia, forbidding the legislature to receive any petitions from slaves, or any petition on behalf of slaves, though the petitioners were freemen. This was the only precedent for the course he proposed to adopt of prohibiting the discussion of a great wrong. But he would scarcely find Irishmen a suitable subject for such an experiment. "I belong," O'Connell continued in tones that thrilled his audience, "I belong to a nation of eight millions, and there is besides a million of Irishmen in England. If Sir Robert Peel has the audacity to cause a contest to take place between the two countries, we will put him in the wrong, for we will begin no rebellion, but I tell him from this place that he dare not begin that strife against Ireland."

By this speech O'Connell may be said to have determined the character of the contest. To the threat of unconstitutional force he answered by open defiance. It was a reply well becoming the leader of a nation in such a contingency, if it expressed his actual intentions. But if it did not express his actual intentions, if he would under no circumstances resist aggression by force, if, as he afterwards insisted, "no political amelioration was worth one drop of blood," he was entering on a path which could conduct him only to defeat and humiliation. He was coerced by no external circumstances to adopt this defiant tone. He might have said that he was striving for a perfectly legal object, and meant to strive for it within the limits of the constitution, and that opinion, upon which alone he relied, could not be restrained by arms. He would have been effectually helped in this policy by the concurrence of sober men of both nations; for the threat of the Minister to employ force against a constitutional movement was so hopelessly wrong that no Government has since imitated it under similar provocation. On the other hand, had he seriously contemplated making good his words in any extremity, there were obvious duties flowing from such a determination which it is now certain he did not undertake; primarily the duty of not being caught unprepared.

After anxious consultation with his colleagues, Davis wrote in the same spirit that O'Connell had spoken, but in the tone of a man expressing his deliberate conviction and fixed intention. Up to this time Repeal had been little more than the watchword of popular discontent; we resolved to teach men to think it out as a political

problem; and we exhorted them either to abandon the design or to take the measures necessary to success in so great an achievement.

"A little foresight," Davis wrote, "saves much misery. If the Irish people have not patience, prudence, and courage; if they are not prepared to endure delay and persecution, to obey their leaders strictly; and, finally, if they will hereafter hesitate to face suffering, danger, and death itself for liberty, let them at once abandon a contest for which nature never fitted them."

Assuming that they would decide for the manlier course, he advised that the organization should be pressed on without regard to threats of coercion, and that the happy work of composing old feuds should be persisted in. Coercion might come, but let it come.

"Bide your time" (it was thus he concluded), "God may soften the hearts or enlighten the minds of the English people, now made tools of an aristocracy which tramples us and plunders both. But if all this fails, God will strengthen your hand in His good time. Time is the redresser of wrong. Time is the parent of opportunity."

Dillon, who hitherto had certainly not contemplated force as a probable agent in the contest, was greatly moved by the language of Sir Robert Peel. At a meeting of his native county some weeks after, he put the case with great simplicity and force:—

"Sooner than grant the demand of universal Ireland, the Ministers are prepared to lay waste her fields and cover them with the bodies of her slaughtered people. What is this but to substitute brute force, which is the principle of despotism, for the consent of the people, which is the principle of constitutional government? And what are we if we submit to this but slaves?"

The reception given to the Minister's menace in England was widely different. Journals of nearly every shade of opinion applauded it as decisively as their predecessors had applauded the menace of Lord North to the American colonies. The *Standard*, then a Ministerial organ, recommended prompt coercion. The *Globe* and *Morning Chronicle*, Opposition journals, admitted that the agitation ought to be put down, but were of opinion that a Whig Government must be called in to put it down effectually. The *Times*, less embarrassed by party engagements, was more reasonable and moderate. It attributed the state of public feeling in Ireland to the neglect of all measures of concession. Reform would have been more effectual than bayonets, but what measures had the Peel Government passed or even proposed for the

benefit of Ireland? It frankly acknowledged the marvellous growth of the national movement. O'Connell had again become a great power.

"A people"—this was the emphatic language of warning employed —"a people labouring under unexampled distress send in their £600 a week to a Repeal Fund, contributed generally in the inverse ratio of their means. The rabble of Repealers is joined by respectable and well-intentioned persons, and an insignificant faction has become a powerful party. In all this there is neither Whiggery nor Radicalism, nor pursuit of Roman Catholic as opposed to Protestant interests: it aims at being and almost threatens to become a National Movement."

When Sir Robert Peel uttered his menace, there had been no violation of law or public order either committed or threatened in Ireland. To publicly proclaim to a high-spirited people that they must abandon their constitutional rights or be prepared to defend them at the peril of their lives, was to make persistence inevitable. Any nation, in any age of the world, which had shrunk from such an alternative, would have been accounted base. And he placed himself in the wrong not merely before Ireland, but more disastrously before Europe and America. He enlisted the sympathy of civilised countries on the side of a people so wantonly outraged. To the doctrine then proclaimed, that force would be employed against opinion, we may trace back as to their root two unsuccessful insurrections in Ireland, and a foreign policy in England which has permanently lowered her prestige in the world. Speaking of the occurrence at a later period, an eminent statesman declared that from that day forth "England's practice of interposing brusquely in Continental quarrels, by flinging her musket and her money-bag into the wavering scale of diplomacy, was heard of no more."

In Ireland Peel had not only insulted the bulk of the people, but wounded the pride of the class upon whom alone he could count for support. The declaration that though all parties in that country were agreed, their wishes would have no weight in determining a question of international policy, offended the pride of Irish gentlemen. Among both Conservatives and Whigs there were many who complained that the Minister had treated their country in a manner in which he would not have presumed to treat the other island. They desired to maintain the Union, but they could not regard it as a thing so sacred that it was

improper to debate its repeal or modification. The policy of Repeal no doubt involved considerations of high national interest, and England might well entertain rooted objections to it—it was thus they argued—but if her objections were to be a perpetual bar to the consideration of the question, Ireland was not her partner but her vassal. If the Union between the countries was an equal union, there is a law of divorce, in case of urgent need, for nations as well as for other ill-assorted couples. A case for divorce had not perhaps been made out, but it is not permissible to answer a woman's demand for separate maintenance by threat of cutting her throat if she persist in it, nor was it permissible to answer the demand of a nation by this method.[1]

The strong language of the Minister produced one important result, it forced men to consider their position. Up to this time the National party had not forecast, with sufficient care, the means and method by which their object might be accomplished. It may be argued that this is a task which ought to have preceded any action; but they have read history to little purpose who believe that men enter on resistance to wrong only after they have predetermined by what stage the contest is to be conducted to its remote issue. Hampden and Washington certainly did not know how far they were going when they withstood the unauthorised tax-gatherer, and O'Connell as little knew the length he must go when he lifted the flag of nationality. At the outset it is probable that he only proposed to himself the task of proving that Ireland was discontented with the Union, and that important concessions must be made to appease her. But after the Corporation debate, the enthusiasm of the people reacted on him, and he began to hope that there was a chance of accomplishing all he promised. No international compact, he was accustomed to say, can be permanently maintained except on the condition of mutual consent. Treaties between independent nations end when they cease to be useful to both parties, and between nations united under the same Crown the basis of agreement is at bottom substantially the same. England would no doubt be unwilling to give Ireland the benefit of this principle; she had been more unwilling, however, to give her Catholic Emancipation, but

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[1] Evidence of this feeling will be found in the Conservative journals at the time. The wound so rankled that three or four years later the most authoritative mouthpiece of the party recurred to it. "There can be no more fatal delusion than to suppose that Irish gentlemen, because they do not profess the Roman Catholic religion, are insensible to contemptuous language against their country, or that they are disposed to rest satisfied under any social inferiority whatever to the rest of the United Kingdom."—*Dublin University Magazine*, Feb., 1847.

in the end Emancipation was conceded to the determined will of the Irish people; why not repeal of the Union?

The young men remembered how many English statesmen and writers had advocated Emancipation before it was granted, and how large a Parliamentary support it commanded, and they saw that the cases were by no means parallel. But in 1782 National Independence —the very concession now wanted—was yielded because the Irish people were organised into a Volunteer army; and in 1829 Emancipation was proffered by men long pledged to resist it, because the Irish people were so effectually disciplined that they met at the bidding of their leaders on the same day in every part of the island, and, in the language of Sheil, "the tramp of four millions of men was heard afar off." On neither occasion was a shot fired, and the same perfect organisation and discipline, resting on a public opinion made resolute by knowledge and by the sympathy of other nations, would, they were persuaded, produce the same result once again.

Upon these somewhat vague and sentimental speculations suddenly broke in the realistic declaration of the Minister that on this occasion England would not yield but fight; and men were driven to reconsider their theories in relation to this unexpected fact. What O'Connell thought and determined in the contingency can only be a subject of conjecture; what he did was to speak like a man who had deliberately made up his mind that if the Government carried out their threat it was his duty to resist. That he might have resisted any attempt to put down the Repeal agitation by force, with as clear a conscience as Hampden resisted ship money, or Hancock resisted the tea duty, was the opinion of sober and experienced men, then and since. The resistance might have been exclusively moral, or it might have been first moral, and, these means failing, then physical; and nothing can be clearer than that the duty was now put upon him to determine by which of these paths he would advance. It is certain O'Connell had a strong, and, as it proved, a quite inordinate reliance on Peel's infirmity of purpose as a factor in the contest. Peel had before yielded to fear, doubtless to a noble fear for the public weal, what he had denied to reason and justice, and to excite his fears seemed a sure expedient. And Peel himself was but the creature of a Parliamentary majority, which might any day disappear, or which he might some day desert. Who, after all, O'Connell asked, was it that had threatened Ireland with the *ultima ratio?* Not the people of England, but an agent of the English aristocracy, a singularly unstable agent, too. Had he not

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"THE UNCROWNED MONARCH'S FIRST LEVEE."

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announced, in language equally emphatic and explicit, his determination to maintain the subjection of the Catholics within a few months of the time when he brought down a bill for their emancipation? "It is the firm unchanging conviction of my mind," he said on that occasion, "that the disabilities imposed on the Roman Catholics are not such as ought to be removed." When this declaration of unchangeable conviction was read to a laughing audience, O'Connell, in a tone of personal banter, which is often more persuasive than logic with a humorous people, demanded if it were not probable that at the fitting time and under adequate pressure here was the very man who would himself introduce a bill to Repeal the Union?[1]

To the young men it was a moral necessity that they should see their way clearly, and select it deliberately. They accepted O'Connell's programme to press on the organisation, and, if it were interrupted by any arbitrary stroke of authority, to resist the aggression. But they were persuaded that it was a waste of time to array masses of men and utter defiant language in order to overcome the opposition of England, if the will of the Irish people in the last resource proved to be not a sheathed sword, but an empty scabbard. The peaceful process of the Constitution by which changes are accomplished in England without any exhibition of force rests on the understanding that the will of the people, whenever it is clearly ascertained, will prev l, but in Ireland this principle was far from being acknowledged; in that country it was necessary to forecast a further stage. The young men, who relied much more confidently than O'Connell did on winning over the Protestant middle class, believed that a united nation could accomplish their wishes surely and peacefully. They knew that the Protestant middle class would be estranged by any apprehension of a physical conflict with England, and such a conflict was therefore a contingency they would gladly have averted—provided it could be averted with honour. But whatever they threatened or promised, they meant, to the best of their ability, to accomplish, when the need came. They desired to raise a nation of eight millions and upwards, inhabiting an island rich in the elements of public wealth, to its natural and rightful place among nations, and they aimed to do so as Grattan had done—by negotiation supported by the ascertained will of the people. But if negotiation so supported failed, they were prepared and resolved to fight and die

[1] That this audacious prediction was not, in the opinion of Englishmen, altogether visionary may perhaps be assumed from the fact that the public censor, Mr Punch, afterwards pictured Peel kissing hands at the first levee of the Irish Liberator!

rather than that their native land should continue to be impoverished and humiliated for the profit of strangers. It was at this price liberty had been bought by other nations, and it was not, they thought, too high a price. Tested by the strict maxims of municipal law, or by the obligations of allegiance, such an intention was doubtless an offence which carries the heaviest penalty; but if it be tested by the law to which Englishmen appeal when they have to judge the aspirations of Hungarians or Italians, the natural law founded on the obligations of conscience and the inherent rights of a people, a different verdict will probably be pronounced.

The language of the *Nation* was strictly in accordance with this determination. The course of duty and honour, the people were reminded, was to press on. History would have had a widely different tale to tell if great enterprises had been abandoned before the menaces of authority. The latest instance was as significant as any; five years ago Canada was threatened and scolded in the same fashion; if she had turned back, she would still be a chained and whipped slave; but she did not turn back, and she was now mistress of her own destiny.

In this state of public feeling any fact injurious to the Peel Government was welcome; and two incidents happened which not only deepened the popular wrath but disturbed the minds of men well affected to the administration. They are detailed in a note at the end of the chapter.

All these circumstances increased the tension of the public mind. The English Minister was pledged to repress the Repeal movement, and to repress it by force if necessary. The Irish tribune was pledged not to give way, even to force. The contest had become a duel between them, which was watched with intense interest by the two nations, and which soon came to attract the attention of every free State in Europe or America.

NOTE ON CHAPTER VI.

TWO INCIDENTS DURING THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT.

In 1842 there were no railways in Ireland, except local lines a few miles in length, and the mails were still carried by coaches. One of the sights of the metropolis was the daily despatch of these showy vehicles from the General Post-Office, and once a year they made a holiday procession through the city, and "suffered themselves to be admired." Coachbuilding was still a prosperous pursuit in Dublin, and five hundred artisans were constantly engaged making, painting, and repairing the vehicles employed by the Post-Office. For thirty years the contract for carrying the Irish mails had been in the hands of Mr Peter Purcell, either singly or in conjunction with other capitalists. Lord Lowther, Postmaster-General at this time, invited tenders in England and Scotland for the Irish service of 1843, and the tender of Mr Croal, a Scotch contractor, being the lowest, was accepted. To fulfil his contract in good time, Mr Croal must bring coaches ready-made to Ireland. As this result would close Mr Purcell's factory, and throw a crowd of workmen out of employment, it created an angry feeling not only among the artisans of Dublin but among the political friends of Mr Purcell; and since his quarrel with O'Connell his friends had multiplied among the Whig and Conservative gentry and merchants. A meeting was held at the Mansion House, and a deputation of leading citizens was sent to remonstrate with the Lord Lieutenant. They contended that Mr Purcell's tender was practically the lowest; and complained that while the Irish mail contract was extensively advertised in England and Scotland, no advertisement of the English contract appeared in the Irish papers. But the Lord Lieutenant was able to afford them little comfort; he had no power to do what they asked, or to do anything but communicate their memorial to the Government in London. This reception, which was inevitable under the circumstances, and might have been foreseen, mortified the important persons who had moved in the matter. And the nationalists condoled sarcastically with Irish noblemen and merchants, who were told by officials calling themselves an Irish government that the merits of their remonstrance must be decided elsewhere, and by an authority upon whom their wishes and feelings would probably have slight influence. The Unionist Press in Ireland had supported the deputation, and shared their sense of defeat. In their humiliation they recommended measures which would teach Ministers what was due to Irish gentlemen. The *Mail* proposed the formation of an Irish Parliamentary party in which peers and Members of the Lower House, without reference to their political opinions, might unite to resist aggressions upon Irish interests. And while the Tories muttered nationality, the Whigs, being in opposition, probably whispered a little sedition. A song adapted to the popular "Shan Van Vocht" appeared in the *Evening Post*, the organ of Irish Whigs, ending with this significant suggestion—

"Where will the coaches run?
Says the Shan Van Vocht.
Where will the coaches run?
Says the Shan Van Vocht.
Through Limerick and Clare,
On the Curragh of Kildare;
Oh, *that* I'll bar, I swear,
Says the Shan Von Vocht."[1]

The idea of an Irish party was of course ill received in London. The *Standard* remonstrated against the "wicked madness" of Irish Protestants who countenanced such a project, and the *Morning Chronicle* sneered at a national sentiment on a question so trumpery. The *Nation* admitted that the wrong complained of was a trifle, but bade the sneerer remember the result of so trifling an injustice as Wood's halfpence, when the voice of Swift summoned the country to resistance. The disputed contract was the opportunity rather than the cause of co-operation, and was only important if men were beginning to long for union; for occasion does not load or level the gun, it only pulls the trigger. The subject was mentioned in Parliament, and a Memorial was at length presented to Peel, signed by two thousand five hundred citizens of Dublin, among whom the Duke of Leinster, the Provost of Trinity College, and many leading merchants were included; but it came to nothing, and Mr Croal was left in possession of his contract.

While the result was still in doubt, an unexpected ally presented himself in the person of a young English artist, who had recently written a bantering book upon Ireland, under the *nom de plume* of Michael Angelo Titmarsh. What he was to become in the fulness of time was scarcely anticipated in England at that period, and not at all anticipated in Ireland. He had dedicated his "Irish Sketch Book" to "Harry Lorrequer," but had not apparently established himself in the good graces of the literary Tories, for he was understood to be the original of an English tourist in Ireland, bitterly burlesqued in one of Dr Lever's novels; and the nationalists only remembered that he had been contemptuous of Repeal, and had caricatured O'Connell with a face of the type which Cockney artists associate with a blunderbuss. Mr Purcell had treated the young artist with consideration and hospitality during his visit to Ireland, and out of gratitude, perhaps, he took sides promptly in the Croal and Purcell contest. A friend brought me for anonymous publication in the *Nation* two illustrations, with accompanying verses, enclosed in a note from Mr Thackeray. One drawing presented a stage-coach driven by a Highlander plaided and plumed, and with another Highlander for guard, but without a single passenger, while the country children jeered at the empty vehicle and its outlandish officials. The second illustration and the accompanying squib by the same hand, which was published in the *Nation*, I think worth while reproducing as a curiosity of literature. They will make a pleasant offset for the "Battle of Limerick."

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[1] The Shan Van Vocht is a figurative name for Ireland, and the tune admits of an easy adaptation to any popular feeling as the English Derry Down. The Curragh of Kildare was the Champ de Mars of Irish sedition.

"On the Curragh of Kildare
The boys will all be there
With their pikes in good repair,
Says the Shan Van Vocht."

Daddy, I'm Hungry.

A SCENE IN AN IRISH COACHMAKER'S FAMILY, DESIGNED BY LORD LOWTHER, JULY 1843.

A SWEET little picture, that's fully desarving
  Your lordship's approval, we here riprisint—
A poor Irish coachmaker's family starving
  (More thanks to your lordship) is dhrawn in the print.

See the big lazy blackguard ! although it is Monday,
  He sits at his ease with his hand to his cheek,
And doin' no more work nor a Quaker on Sunday,
  Nor your lordship's own self on most days of the week.

And thim's the two little ones, Rory and Mysie,
  Whom he'd dandle and jump every night on his knee—
Faith he gives the poor darlin's a welcome as icy
  As I'd give a bum-bailiff that came after me !

He turns from their prattle as angry as may be,
  "O daddy, I'm hungry," says each little brat ;
And yonder sits mammy, and nurses the baby,
  Thinking how long there'll be dinner for that.

For daddy and children, for babby and mammy,
No work and no hope, O! the prospect is fine;
But I fancy I'm hearing your lordship cry—"Dammee,
Suppose they *do* starve, it's no business of mine."

Well, it's "justice," no doubt, that your lordship's obsarving,
And that must our feelings of hunger console;
We're five hundred families, wretched and starving,
But what matters that, so there's *Justice for Croal!*

The other incident touched the Government more directly. The campaign which began against the exterminating landlords in the first number of the *Nation* was carried on in a fashion of which they had no previous experience. While the legal basis and limits of their rights were examined in essays and articles, the offences of particular landlords were disclosed as plainly as if no law of libel existed, and as circumstantially as if the facts were to be published in the privileged reports of an Irish Parliament. It was plainly insisted that the feudal system which gave the life of the serf to the disposal of his lord was not more barbarous or irrational than the right claimed by Irish landlords to "exterminate" their tenantry. And where famine was a common calamity it was thought necessary to teach plainly as a maxim of State policy, as well as of morality, that the land was charged with the support of the people who cultivated it before all other incumbrances, whether rent, tithes, or taxes. Father Davern, the priest whose letters against O'Connell on the abandonment of the tithe war had excited so vivid an impression, threw himself into the new contest. He lived on the estate of Lord Hawarden, then a Lord-in-Waiting to the Queen, whose position as a member of the Peel Administration fitted him to be made an example. In a series of letters addressed directly to the courtly official, Father Davern charged him with the wholesale and deliberate destruction of his Catholic tenantry in Tipperary. He then proceeded to point out the effect of "extermination" upon the character of the peasantry, the fruit of whose skill and industry were swept away by the landlord in payment of exorbitant rents, and who in the end were cast out of their miserable homes in the midst of their ragged and starving children. These forlorn outcasts, beyond the limits of further endurance, without respect for the law which gave them no protection, became desperate and reckless, and were ready to engage in outrage, insubordination, and murder. This was the well-head of crime in Ireland. Mr Kemmis, the Crown Solicitor for the Leinster circuit, had declared before a Parliamentary committee known as the Roden Committee, of which Lord Hawarden was himself a member, that "the great majority of violent crimes in Tipperary were produced by turning tenants out of possession." Mr Howley, the Assistant Barrister, a man of moderate and even Conservative opinions, stated before the same committee that he had ascertained, by conference with other assistant Barristers, that "ejectments were more numerous in Tipperary than in any other county." He himself had one hundred and fifty to try in a single session. He was ready to name a landlord in that county who was conspicuous for ejecting his tenantry, but the chairman forbade him to do so.

"When this evidence was given in your presence," Father Davern demanded of the courtier, "had your lordship any misgivings about the identity of the Tipperary landlord whom Mr Howley was ready to name? Allow me to remove all doubt about the matter by informing all whom it may concern that Lord Hawarden

was that Tipperary landlord. Never, indeed, was allegation more justified than that of awarding to your lordship the glory or ignominy of ejecting the largest number of tenantry in the county. Over two hundred families, comprising thirteen hundred human beings, were evicted from their holdings on your lordship's estate. They were exterminated root and branch from the land, not because they failed to pay the rack-rent, but because they had no other tenure of their farms or homesteads than the good or bad will of their landlord or his agent."

Father Davern then set out in detail the names of the farmers ejected, their places of residence, and the number of persons in each family, and specifically stated that they were ejected because they were Catholics, and had been replaced by Protestants. Many were dead.

"Their houses were burnt or demolished, and they themselves were driven as outcasts on the highway. This expulsion took place in the dearth of summer as well as during the inclemency of winter. Among the evicted were persons of every age and sex, the widow and her orphans, the aged and infirm, the wife in the throes of labour, the husband in the rage of fever. The bogs and mountains many were obliged to make their resting-places—others swarmed into the lanes and alleys of the neighbouring towns of Cashel and Golden; others ventured across the Atlantic. Pestilence and fever generated by famine slew their hundreds, but hundreds still survive to eat the bread of sorrow, as inmates of the poorhouses throughout the county.[1] The assessment for their support, instead of being levied on your lordship's estate, from which they were evicted, is charged as a heavy impost on the capital, industry, and labour of the merchants, shopkeepers, and tradesmen of the towns which afford these paupers shelter. I appeal to her Majesty's Government and to the British Parliament, and I ask them how can Tipperary be tranquil and happy when a noble of the land, a Peer of Parliament, a Lord-in-Waiting on the Queen, will allow the industrious population on his property to be driven to desperation?"

These deliberate and circumstantial charges made under the writer's name, and published in a journal which had been scrupulously sober and exact in dealing with individual offences, made a profound impression. It was the Government—such was the cry that naturally arose—one of whose members was engaged in driving the industrious population out of the country, which presumed to forbid the people of Ireland to resume the management of their own affairs for the protection of their dearest interests!

The facts were referred to in Parliament, and it soon got whispered abroad that Sir Robert Peel called on Lord Hawarden for an explanation, and that Lord Hawarden had described the charges as shameful misrepresentations.[1] He was informed—so it was believed—that a member of the administration must not rest under shameful misrepresentation, and was required to justify himself and convict his assailants before a jury. The

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[1] Sir Robert Peel had a genuine horror of exterminating landlords, though he had not adequate courage to restrain them by law. A few years later, speaking in Parliament of the extermination in Clare, he said: "I must say, I do not think the records of any country, civilised or barbarous, ever presented such a statement as that which has been presented to the house in a letter by Captain Kennedy. This gentleman—officer, I believe, in Her Majesty's service—I presume of unquestionable veracity, states this fact, that in one union—at a time of famine—within one year, 15,000 persons have been driven from their homes; and that within the last month 1,200 more persons had their houses levelled to the ground. I know not, sir, if it be possible for the law to apply a remedy to that system, but in the House of Commons, at least, it provokes the expression of our deepest indignation."

Solicitor-General for Ireland accordingly applied to the Queen's Bench for a conditional order to file a criminal information against Mr Gavan Duffy for having published the letters in question. He moved on the affidavits of Lord Hawarden and his agent. With respect to the frightful catalogue of exterminations they made a general denial; certain of the persons named never were tenants of Lord Hawarden; another class were not Catholics, as the letters alleged, replaced by Protestants, but actually Protestants who were replaced by Catholics; and a third class consisted of persons who had volunteered to resign their farms and accept compensation, which had been duly paid them. On the strength of these specific denials the learned solicitor confidently affirmed that every one of the accusations proved on investigation to be grossly false. An offer had been made on behalf of Lord Hawarden that if evidence were furnished which would bring home the letters to Father Davern, proceedings would be taken against him instead of the newspaper proprietor, but this information and assistance had been refused and he was unwillingly compelled to proceed against Mr Duffy. The rule *nisi* was, of course, granted to the injured nobleman, whose marvellous contention was that a country priest did not know the religion, or the residence, or the calamities, of his own parishioners.

O'Connell, who was often bitter and unscrupulous, but never malignant in his quarrels, seeing his old antagonist, Father Davern, in this difficulty, caused it to be communicated to him that, if he was in a position to substantiate his charges, the Repeal Association would bear the cost of the case, and enable him to contest it in his own person. Father Davern promptly assented, and publicly assumed the responsibility of establishing the disputed facts. Mr Robert Potter, afterwards member of Parliament for Limerick, was selected by O'Connell to be attorney for the defence; Sheil was retained as leading counsel; and a search was immediately commenced in garrets, cellars, and workhouses for Lord Hawarden's scattered tenantry, that they might tell their own story. The Conservative Press called upon gods and men to take note of the falsehood which characterised complaints against Irish landlords made by demagogues and newspapers. As Lord Hawarden had been libelled by a malignant priest, so had his whole class been libelled by other malignant priests. Englishmen, who had been moved for a moment by the gravity and circumstantiality of the charges, probably concluded, after these assurances, that they had only to wait a little to see them completely disproved. But Lord Hawarden was not impatient for this salutary demonstration; they had a long time to wait, and, as we shall see, never reached the demonstration after all. These obscure annals of a rustic parish are tedious and forgotten, but whoever desires to understand why poverty and discontent were so common in Ireland, and in what manner Irish facts are sometimes triumphantly refuted in England, would do well to pursue the story to the end.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST STROKE OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE COUNTER STROKE.

WHILE the people were still exasperated by the menace of the Prime Minister one of the projected county meetings took place at Mullingar. It was the first answer of the country to the threat of coercion, and it proved a significant answer. Meath and Westmeath are distributed into farms far above the average size in Ireland, held by a tenantry nearly as prosperous as the tenantry of Bucks or Devonshire. These farmers attended the meeting in vast numbers, followed by their sons and labourers. It was estimated that more than 100,000 persons were present; and as parish after parish arrived at the muster, marching in separate bodies, headed by their temperance bands, the spectacle was not calculated to suggest submission to arbitrary authority. At the meeting O'Connell's language was cautious. He assumed that the Government were about to retreat before public opinion. "Wellington and Peel were ready enough to show their teeth, but they could not bite. And why? Because the object of Repealers was legitimate and their means peaceful and lawful." But at a banquet in the evening he renewed his pledge to resist aggression. "We shall violate no law, we shall break through no constitutional principle; if they attack us we shall be like the woolsacks on the walls of a fortification; until, should they persevere too far, our patience would become exhausted, and human nature would call for a more steady resistance. I do not mean to threaten, but I defy them to break down the *vis inertiæ* of our calm reason."

Dr Higgins, who had recently announced the sympathy of the episcopacy with the national cause, took a more decisive tone. To the threat of suppressing the movement he replied that it was impossible; it was indestructible.

"I for one defy any Minister of England to put down agitation in the diocese of Ardagh. If they attempt to rob us of the daylight, and prevent us from assembling in open fields, we will retire to the chapels

and suspend all other instruction in order to devote our time to teaching the people to be Repealers. If they beset our temple with spies, we will prepare our people for these circumstances; and if for that they bring us to the scaffold, in dying for the cause of our country we will bequeath our wrongs to our successors."

A bishop, from the discipline of his life and the responsibility of his office, is expected to understate his intentions; and language so direct and significant from such a personage naturally carried conviction. It probably placed O'Connell himself under the necessity of becoming bolder and plainer. Two days later, at a meeting of the Association, he spoke in terms which were universally interpreted to mean that if his legal meetings were interrupted by force he would resist such aggressions by major force.

"They talk of civil war," he said, "but while I live, there shall be no civil war. We won't go to war, we will keep on the legal side. But if others invade us, *that* is not civil war; and I promise them that there is not a Wellingtonian of them all who would less shrink from that contest than I, if they will enforce it upon us. We will violate no law of man or of heaven. We are ready to keep the ground of the Constitution as long as they will permit us to do so; but should they throw us from that ground, then *Væ victis!* between the contending parties."[1]

From this time the tone of public meetings became fierce and confident. Mr O'Callaghan in a letter to the Association bade them remember that if an attempt should be made to gag and butcher the Irish people, the instrument with which the work must be performed was singularly unsuitable for such a task. The so-called English army consisted of 51,000 Englishmen and 41,000 Irishmen, with a handful of Scotch. Fourteen years before, when a regiment in Ireland threw up their caps for O'Connell, the Emancipation Act was passed, and with an army so composed the constitutional agitation of Ireland could not be put down. This letter was inserted in the minutes on the motion of Mr John O'Connell. And a few days later, the same confidential agent of the Leader's intentions and wishes, in a letter to a London journal, counselled them to think on his father's words. "We will not attack; I do not say we will not defend."[2]

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[1] A theory was invented in later times, and took possession of many unreflecting minds, that O'Connell confined himself strictly to moral force doctrines in 1843, and was embarrassed and impeded in this policy by the menacing language of certain "rash young men." The reader will see by and by at what time, and under what circumstances, and for what purpose, this surprising theory was propagated.

[2] Letter of Mr John O'Connell to the *Morning Chronicle*, reprinted in the *Nation*, 27th May 1843.

In pursuance of the scheme for carrying the movement into the provinces O'Connell was invited to Cork. He was received by a procession headed by the trades with bands and banners, and swollen by contingents from every district within thirty miles of the city. The attendance was said to have reached a quarter of a million; but as political arithmetic is not an exact science, it is enough to say that it was large beyond precedent at that time. It was followed by a banquet, and as Cork is more than Dublin the capital of Celtic Ireland, wealthy merchants of a class who still held aloof in the metropolis, influential country gentlemen, thriving professional men, and a large number of the Catholic clergy, attended. O'Connell's speech was a commentary on recent proceedings in the country and in Parliament. With respect to the threatened coercion he indicated a danger it would beget of which the English Press made light, but which in our time we have come to understand was real and serious.

"Suppose some penniless, shoeless Irishman who made his way across the Channel on the deck of a steamer, found himself in Manchester or St Giles's, and collected a number of Irishmen about him, and one would ask him 'What news?' to which he would reply 'Your father was cut down by a dragoon; your mother was shot by a policeman; or your sister—but I will not say what has befallen her;' let this happen, and I will ask Peel how many fires would blaze out in the manufactories of England? . . . . I do not warn you not to be afraid, for that would be ludicrous: I tell you this, that England is incapable of putting you down."

Immense meetings were also held in the North and South Ridings of Tipperary, districts inhabited by a peculiarly athletic and martial peasantry. O'Connell triumphed in the presence of unexampled numbers and the perfect order and good temper displayed. No country had ever presented such a spectacle. At a later meeting held in "Cashel of the Kings," he asked:

"Where was the coward who would not die for such a land? Let them look on that extensive plain, and that verdant valley opening to the Suir, and to that lofty mountain from which Cromwell proclaimed to his sanguinary followers, 'Is not this a country worth fighting for?' The miscreants had their day. The Irish were divided; they violated the constitution and they sunk beneath a foreign influence, but the Irish of the present day were united, they would break no law, they would let him guide them in the paths of peace; he did not like fighting, but let their enemies attack them if they dare."

Ministerial journals from time to time promised that the Government

would take some action in fulfilment of their pledge to Parliament. A general disarmament and the prohibition of Repeal meetings were suggested, but weeks passed, at a time when weeks seemed ages, and nothing was done. The difficulty of a coercive policy was increased by the circumstance that a coercive policy was not universally supported in England. The *Times* renewed its protest. The people of the United Kingdom, it urged, were firmly persuaded that it was better to conciliate by repealing bad laws than to pour troops into Ireland for the purpose of enforcing them, when they could no longer be executed except at the bayonet point. The *Leeds Mercury*, a principal organ of the Dissenters, echoed this warning. The *Northern Star*, on the part of the working-men, whom it represented at that time as authentically as the *Times* represented the middle class, declared that they would not resist Repeal, but aid it in every way; and that the English aristocracy would have to crush two nations instead of one. A fall in the Funds seemed to show that these warnings told upon public opinion, or, at any rate, that the moneyed interests were not too confident of the wisdom of Peel's policy. The Whig party when they happen to be in opposition take an affectionate interest in Irish affairs, and this interest was quickened at the moment by the circumstance that the Government were supposed to be in danger of defeat upon a pending question. Lord Campbell and Lord Clanricarde in the Upper House warned the Duke of Wellington that conciliation would be more effectual in restoring tranquillity to Ireland than harsh language or harsh action; and in the other house Lord Clements and Mr Redington (of whom it will be necessary to speak later as Sir Thomas Redington, Under Secretary for Ireland in 1848) gave a similar admonition to Sir Robert Peel. These were no doubt party manœuvres, but they helped to confirm the impression that no serious attempt would be made to repress a legal movement for a legal object.

But the Government could not long retain the support of the Irish squires without some show of intrepidity, and at length they made their first move. The magistracy are appointed and superseded by the authority of the Lord Chancellor, and the office of Irish Chancellor was at that time filled by Sir Edward Sugden, an eminent English equity lawyer, who was reputed to be imperfectly acquainted with constitutional law, and who was curiously ignorant of the Irish character and Irish affairs. That he should be an Englishman was almost a matter of course; since the Revolution of 1688 there had been nineteen Chancellors in Ireland, of whom twelve had been Englishmen,

one a Scot, and one a West Indian. There was a story current that shortly after his arrival from London to assume the office of Chancellor, a barrister practising in his court, who had recently lost an election, and had had the additional misfortune of disfiguring his face by an accident in hunting, appeared in court tattooed with black plaster. "Who is that disabled man?" the Chancellor inquired of one of his officers. "The *beaten* candidate for Youghal, sir." "Great God!" murmured the Chancellor; "what savages!" The story was perhaps the invention of some of the juniors in the Four Courts, who occupy their leisure with gossip and chaff, but to those who knew the man it did not seem improbable. Five weeks after Peel's declaration the Chancellor suddenly called upon Lord Ffrench, as a magistrate of the County Galway, to state whether he had consented, as was reported, to take the chair at a Repeal meeting about to be held at Caltra in that county. The Irish peer answered with spirit and sense. It was not true that he had consented to take the chair at Caltra. But he volunteered the information that it was his intention to attend the Caltra meeting, and that he had consented to take the chair at Athlone; "both meetings being for the legal and constitutional purpose of petitioning Parliament to repeal the Act of Union." The Chancellor rejoined that Lord Ffrench in connecting himself with a political movement respecting which the Executive Government had so recently declared the hostility of the Crown, and which collected bodies of the people so multitudinous that they had an inevitable tendency to a breach of the peace, disentitled himself to hold the commission of a magistrate, and that he would accordingly order him to be superseded.

Ireland had grown accustomed to strange freaks of authority, but they were generally blows levelled at the humble and ignorant. This was a stroke beyond all modern precedent. Lord Ffrench's offence was that he had not accepted as law the mere *dictum* of a party leader in office, a *dictum* uttered in the House of Commons, of whose proceedings there is no authorised, and even no legal, report; and that he proposed to attend a meeting for a constitutional purpose, not larger than had been repeatedly held in England in modern times for kindred purposes. When the day arrived Lord Ffrench attended the Caltra meeting, accompanied by his two sons, and these gentlemen were immediately removed from the roll of magistrates. A *supersedeas* was also issued against O'Connell and his eldest son; and a little later against Sir Dillon Bellew, Colonel Butler, a scion of the house of Ormonde, and member of Parliament for Kilkenny; Caleb Power,

member for Limerick; Count Nugent, of a family ennobled for political and military services in Austria; Edmund Burke Roche, known in later times as Lord Fermoy, member for the great County of Cork; Sir Valentine Blake, member for Galway; Sir Benjamin Norris, mayor of Waterford, and other gentlemen, four-and-twenty in all, for having attended Repeal meetings or joined the Repeal Association, and, in one crowning case, against Mr Clanchy, who had not made up his mind on the subject of Repeal, for having attended a public dinner to the members of his county where "Repeal of the Union" was among the toasts proposed.

This stroke of executive authority produced results which anyone acquainted with the temper and character of the Irish people would have foreseen. It excited indignation and resistance, not only among Repealers but among men who had hitherto held cautiously or contemptuously aloof from O'Connell. It was regarded as a summons to all parties in the country to submit unconditionally to the will of the English Minister. The right of meeting to petition Parliament lies at the basis of the Constitution. In the language of the statute which fixes the succession of the Crown, it is one of the "true, ancient, and indubitable rights and liberties of the people of this realm;" but it was proposed to deny to magistrates this right. The gentry who performed the duties of justice of the peace without salary or emolument were to be treated as puppets of an English lawyer who held office for a few months in Ireland. They were forbidden even to attend a public entertainment where the list of toasts was not sanctioned by the Minister of the hour. The *Nation*, in language which subsequent events render remarkable, reminded the Irish gentry that this attempt to impose upon them the opinions of an English Minister as a guide for their conduct might land them in unexpected places. "Peel himself," said John Dillon, who was the writer on the occasion, "is day by day stealing towards Free Trade principles, and some day the gentry of Ireland may awaken to find him declare for the abolition of the Corn Laws, with an injunction to all magistrates to refrain from petitioning in their favour on pain of dismissal."[1]

A counter movement immediately began. It showed itself first among the members of the Bar, a profession naturally jealous of attempts to strain the law to party purposes, but which has so much to hope and so much to fear from authority, that since the Union it

[1] *Nation*, May 27.

had seldom set an example of public spirit. Nearly twenty of the Junior Bar, some of them among the most gifted and successful members of their profession, joined the Association in one day as a protest against the Chancellor's arbitrary proceeding. Among them was Sir Colman O'Loghlen,[1] the son of an eminent lawyer who had been made Master of the Rolls with the approval of all classes in Ireland, though he was a Catholic, and the first Catholic who had been raised to the Bench since the Revolution. Sir Colman was himself a skilful and experienced advocate, and a man whose personal character, joined to moderation of opinion and sweetness of temper, made him widely trusted and beloved. In a letter to O'Connell he declared that his motive for joining was to protest against the attempt to put down by coercion the free expression of opinion. "There can be no doubt," he said, "that the question of the Repeal of the Union is open to the most unfettered discussion. The Union was the act of the legislature, and the same power that made it may modify it." So long as the movement was carried on within the limits which the law and the constitution allow, the attempt to interfere with it was, in his opinion, unwarrantable and unconstitutional.

Another serviceable recruit was James O'Hea. He had been distinguished in college for a lively and practical intellect, and since his call to the Bar had been steadily advancing towards a solid and lucrative business. Francis Brady, afterwards Sir Francis Brady and Chief Justice of Newfoundland, like Sir Colman O'Loghlen, brought an historic name to the cause. His elder brother, a lawyer, and the most conspicuous representative of Ulster in the Catholic Association, had been much trusted and beloved, and his memory still hovered like a nimbus over the family name.

Some of the recruits were afterwards destined to become familiar names as writers in the *Nation*, or members of what came to be called the "Young Ireland" party, then barely beginning to be discriminated from the general body of Repealers. Among these was Thomas MacNevin. He had distinguished himself, as we have seen, in the College Historical Society as a competitor with Butt, O'Hea, and Torrens M'Cullagh for its honours and applause, and preceded Davis and Dillon in its chief executive office. He was below the middle size, but well made, well poised, and agile, with auburn hair and clear blue

[1] In later days member for Clare, and Judge Advocate General in the first Gladstone Government.

eyes, which he believed he inherited from Danish ancestors. His face was mobile, and possessed the power not given to one man in ten thousand, of expressing a wide range of feeling without exaggeration or grimace. He was a born orator of the florid and emphatic school, and he had studied elocution as an art under Vandenhoff and Sheridan Knowles. Joyous, exuberant, and fond of display, but of upright and fearless character, it is the supplement of this nature to say that in foresight and judgment he was not strong. He was, indeed, rash and impetuous, but as amenable as a child to friendly counsel. By age—for he was little over thirty—and by culture, he was associated with the young men, but by personal relations and family ties with O'Connell. When he joined the Association he had held no previous communications with his late fellow-students. "Will MacNevin say ditto to Mr Burke?" I whispered to Davis the day he was proposed. "Yes," said Davis, smiling, "within limits; but if Mr Burke provokes him by an arbitrary *coup*, he will let fly an epigram which will stick in his flesh like a barbed arrow."[1] Another was Michael Joseph Barry, nephew of Dr England, an Irish-American bishop who had distinguished himself by literary ability and governing power. Barry had capacity which, if devoted to his profession, would have secured him success at the Bar, but he wandered early into literature; and "my Lady Common Law," as the old jurist warns us, "loveth to lie alone." He had published a text-book of Chancery practice in partnership with an ambitious unsettled young man, at that time eagerly searching for some outlet to fortune easier than the slow apprenticeship of professional work, since known as Mr Justice Keogh, and had written some pleasant rhymes of the Ingoldsby school in the *Dublin University Magazine*. The story ran that another Barry of the same profession had equity business sent him on the strength of "Barry and Keogh's Chancery Practice," and invitations to dinner on the strength of the "Kishoge Papers." The real Simon Pure avenged himself in a good-humoured epigram—

> "No wonder my namesake my anger provokes,
> He is fee'd for my law and is fed for my jokes."

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[1] The age of pamphlets had not quite passed at this time, and MacNevin, like Davis, had written a pamphlet before his call to the Bar. It was entitled "A Letter to Lord Roden on Irish Crime," and was published in London by Effingham Wilson, the "*sage femme*" of Radical literature in that day. After we became friends he gave me a copy, on the title-page of which he described its fate. "This letter," he wrote, "fell dead from the Press. It was a difficult piece of failure, and ought to have sold half a dozen copies."

Barry was still smaller and slighter than MacNevin, but his face was less mobile and expressive, and his intellect less spontaneous, but far more practical. Having written passing well, he afterwards came to speak with power and persuasion, and his judgment was sound and prompt; but it was observed by an unfriendly critic that his intellect resembled a musical box; whatever it was capable of producing lay within arbitrary limits, and was relieved or varied by no spontaneous gushes of unexpected music.[1] Denny Lane was the only son of a Cork distiller, and amused his leisure with literature, art, and law, till the time came for taking up the burthen of the family interests. He brought a generous character, a cultivated taste, a solid intellect, and many accomplishments to the aid of the national party, and especially of that section of it with which he naturally associated himself.[2]

But the signal accession of the day remains to be mentioned. Thomas O'Hagan [3] was then one of the most successful, and beyond comparison the most popular, member of the Junior Bar. It was said of him that he had no enemy. He was sometimes compared by his friends to Francis Horner, for the sweetness of his nature and the unstained probity of his career. His face had the frankness and his bearing that unaffected grace which painters bestow upon Milton and Somers in their youth. Among a profession which has never wanted conspicuous intellect, he was often named as legitimate heir to the eloquence of Curran. From the outset of his career a signal success at the Bar was predicted for him, and he has justified these predictions by attaining to the office and the rank of Plunket, without exciting jealousy by unwarrantable progress, or reproach by any recantation of his political convictions. Mr O'Hagan attended the Association, described his motives in joining it, and indicated the exact position he occupied, a position which was singular in that assembly. It was a speech which reflected his character, where civic courage united with moderation of aims and a proud sense of personal integrity. He desired a federal

[1] Mr Barry's uncle, Dr England, was the subject of a *mot* which it would be a pity not to record. He was a parish priest in the diocese of Cork before he was translated to the scene of his important labours, and was probably more of a student than a missionary. A neighbouring "parochus" meeting his curate one day enquired what Father England was doing just then. "Doing," replied the overworked curate, "why, as usual, doing nothing; England expects every man to do *his* duty."

[2] John M'Mahon, Robert Ferguson, M. R. O'Farrell, John Harkan, James Meade Loughnan, Mathew Moriarty, James O'Dowd, and Robert Hobart, were also among the barristers admitted and several solicitors followed their example, among them Mr John Ferguson, M ,Arthur O'Hagan, and Mr M'Carthy Downing, since member for the County of Cork.

[3] Since Lord O'Hagan of Tullahogue, late Lord Chancellor of Ireland.

union with England; a local Parliament to deal with local interests, and an imperial Parliament, in which Ireland should be adequately represented, to deal with imperial interests. On the dismissal of the magistrates he spoke with a moderation and practical knowledge which proved very persuasive.

"It was suggested that riots might take place at Repeal meetings, and that magistrates who attended them could not be trusted to quell such riots. But anti-Repealers might become rioters as well as Repealers, and were none of the Queen's justices to mingle with those who sustained the Union? Had the Conservatives called for the dismissal of the magistrates, leaders of tens of thousands, in 1835? Had Sir James Graham whispered a complaint of the 'myriad musterings' at Birmingham which carried the Reform Act? Hating anarchy as the worst of evils, and loving ordered and regulated liberty, he regarded the right of free speech and thought as the source and safeguard of all other civil rights. The war upon this right would induce men like himself, who did not approve of many things that were said and done and written for the promotion of popular objects in Ireland, to rally in resistance to assaults upon the chartered privileges of the people."

It was questioned by competent critics whether the Association, in whose main aim he did not agree, and whose methods he censured, ought to have received this recruit; but the gain was so manifest that O'Connell overleaped impediments and declared that Federalists were entitled to become members, and joyfully welcomed Mr O'Hagan on his own terms.

On the day of these notable accessions the people did their part also; the Repeal Rent reached the sum of two thousand two hundred pounds, an amount never contributed in one week to the famous Association which had liberated the Catholic people.[1]

This movement of the Bar was not encouraging to the Government, but a resistance still more embarrassing sprang up among the magistracy. They considered their office degraded by the spy system established by the Chancellor, and they were still sore at Peel's avowed indifference to Irish opinion. Mr Smith O'Brien became the spokesman of this sentiment. William Smith O'Brien was a younger son of one of the great historic Irish houses. His descent from Brian

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[1] Respecting these recruits, Davis wrote to his friend, Daniel Owen Maddyn: "It was O'Hea, an old C. H. Society friend, who joined the Association, not the goose O'H——. O'Hea, as you know, is a man of vast powers, and is succeeding at his profession. O'Loughlin is an abler and firmer man than his letter would show; I thought it a very poor letter. Lane is all you describe him, a fine fellow. O'Hagan has the best business of any outer bar man on his circuit. He is a good man, and of great energy, and a trained speaker. M'Cullagh is Federalist, and has done nothing till the last three days. He is now sobered and working for Federalism."

Borhoime—the Alfred of Irish history—was as well established as the descent of William the Fourth from William the Conqueror. At an early period after the Reformation this branch of the O'Briens had become Protestants, and in the time of the Commonwealth had allied themselves with Cromwell, and become odious to the nation. In the Irish Parliament his father resisted the Union along with the best of his order, but from the pride of class rather than the pride of race. Smith O'Brien had made his first plunge into Irish politics at the Clare election of 1828, in opposition to O'Connell, and had since stood coldly aloof from the Irish tribune in the House of Commons. But he was a man keenly sensitive to injustice, and more easily moved to wrath by a public than a personal wrong. With a genuine sympathy for the industrious people, he was an aristocrat in feeling and sentiment, and was proud and jealous of the character of an Irish gentleman. He probably felt outraged that the son of an English barber should have presumed to menace an Irish peer, and might even esteem himself entitled to issue orders to the descendant of an *Ardrigh* who had ruled Ireland before the House of Hanover had emerged into history. Mr O'Brien inquired in Parliament whether the law, as interpreted by the Chancellor, extended to England. And he desired, for his own guidance, to be informed, if he presented a petition for Repeal of the Union from either of the counties of which he was a magistrate, whether he would be superseded? Sir James Graham, who was then Home Secretary, made a petulant and evasive reply; and Mr O'Brien immediately resigned the commission of the peace. Henry Grattan, member for Meath, the bearer of another historic name, followed his example. John Power, of Gurteen, Kean Mahony, John Hyacinth Talbot, and other Whig country gentlemen of note, took the same course, and after a little time Sir Richard Musgrave and Lord Cloncurry.

The thanks of the Association were voted to Mr O'Brien for the example he had set. In acknowledging it he declared that he was not a Repealer. He was still disposed to believe that justice and good government might be obtained without a dissolution of the Union, but he could not blame those who thought differently for organising to give their opinion effect. In conclusion, he used language to which subsequent events lend a tragic interest, but which assuredly expressed his belief and intentions at that time as truly as human language ever expressed a human purpose:—

"I earnestly hope and believe that the conduct of our population will be

such as not only to afford no pretext for coercion, but even to command the respect and admiration of mankind. Should it unfortunately be otherwise—should violence and crime prevail— a great national effort, originating in the highest and noblest impulses, will degenerate into an unsuccessful rebellion, disastrous alike to the victors and the vanquished. Write then upon your banners, 'Peace, Order, Union, Resolution.' Welcome the whole army of Great Britain, which it seems is to be sent to crush an imaginary rebellion. Welcome the British navy, now occupying for the first time our spacious but deserted harbours. Yet let our rulers perceive that bayonets cannot suppress opinion, and that the opinions of a great—would to God I could say an united—nation were never yet spoken in vain."[1]

When the subject was mentioned in Parliament the Government defended the Chancellor somewhat coldly; and the Whig Law Lords unequivocally condemned him. Lord Cottenham, who had held the Great Seal, declared that meetings to petition for repeal of the Union were legal, though of course meetings for any purpose might become illegal; and he pronounced the dismissal of the magistrates to be unconstitutional. Lord Campbell, who was on his road to the marble chair, affirmed that to make a meeting illegal its object must be illegal, but petitioning for the repeal of the Union was not an illegal object; nor was it made so by the declaration of ministers in Parliament—which could not alter the law.

In the other House, Lord John Russell, as leader of the Opposition, proclaimed that the act of Union was as open to discussion as any other Act of Parliament; an obvious truth, which only needed to be insisted upon because it had been so rudely called in question by a powerful Minister.

A little later it was noticed that magistrates still attended Repeal meetings and were not dismissed; and Mr Wyse, with the air of bland courtesy which an Opposition member is apt to put on when he has hit a palpable blot, asked the Home Secretary, would he be good enough to explain why exceptions and distinctions were made in carrying out the policy of the Government? Nine magistrates had attended a Repeal banquet, and only two of them had been dismissed. How was this? Sir James Graham was driven hard for an explanation, when he consented to say that the magistrates dismissed had attended a Repeal meeting in the morning and a Repeal dinner in the evening; the others who were not dismissed had only attended the Repeal dinner. Mr Wyse wished to know, for the public guidance, whether to become liable to dismissal it was now necessary to attend both a

[1] Mr Smith O'Brien's letter to the Repeal Association.

meeting and a dinner; and, if so, how came Mr Clanchy to be superseded, who had only attended a dinner to his county members, and who was not a Repealer? The Government were not ready with any satisfactory reply, and it became plain that they were somewhat at fault, and perhaps not quite at one, with respect to Chancellor Sugden's proceedings. But majorities in both houses sustained them with emphatic confidence and applause.

Nevertheless their first stroke had not only proved a *coup manqué*, as a measure of repression, but had greatly widened the basis and increased the resources of the national movement. But they had another arrow in their quiver. An Arms Act, which enabled the Executive to search for and seize suspicious weapons, was about to expire, and the Government proposed to renew it with fresh and more stringent provisions. The use of firearms was to be restricted to persons who obtained a license from a bench of magistrates in a country where benches of magistrates sometimes constituted the officers of an Orange lodge; and new and vexatious impediments were proposed, plainly designed to obstruct the obtainment of licences. All arms were to be registered, and to be marked with the Government. brand. The possession of a spear, or any weapon capable of being used as a pike or spear, was made penal; the first offence to be punished with twelve months' imprisonment, the second with transportation. A single justice could grant a warrant to search for unlawful weapons, or commit a person whom he deemed suspicious, and one witness was sufficient for a conviction. Inordinate power was given to the police, amounting to the odious right of domiciliary visits. This measure, if it became law, would enable the Government to sweep the country bare of all means of resistance to arbitrary aggression. It might be made the instrument of the most intolerable wrong. It would enable a vindictive enemy to ruin a farmer by hiding a rusty bayonet in his haystack. It would enable a disappointed seducer, of the class who were habitually made magistrates, to send his pander into the bed-chamber of a virtuous Irishwoman on pretence of searching for arms. A precedent was discovered, however; a nearly identical law existed in the Southern States of America—with respect to negroes and mulattoes.

The reception of the proposal in the House of Commons furnishes a gauge of the effect produced by the national movement. Measures as objectionable had passed as a matter of course, after a hopeless protest by a handful of the Irish members. But Ireland was asserting

herself, and she had friends, as the strong and resolute always have. The Irish Liberal members who were not Repealers took the lead in resistance. Mr Sharman Crawford moved the rejection of the measure, and was seconded by Lord Clements, who would have preferred a motion that the Sergeant-at-Arms be directed to kick the bill out of doors. Mr Crawford was the Ulster landlord whom we have seen take O'Connell to task for abandoning the anti-tithe movement. As he sat for an English borough the motive of courting popularity could not be imputed to him; and Lord Clements, heir to the Earl of Leitrim, was equally free from this suspicion. Mr Shiel, Mr Wyse, and other Catholic members who held aloof from the Repeal movement, brought Parliamentary experience and party connection with the Whigs in support of the resistance, and made it formidable by numbers as well as by ability. Peel's second stroke threatened to miss its mark as disastrously as the first.

The debate is one which a statesman charged with the duty of governing Ireland, or a journalist who has habitually to judge the public action of that country, may still study with advantage.

Mr Crawford, who was well acquainted with the province of Ulster, contended that the measure, if it became law, would place arms in the hands of Protestants and withdraw arms from the hands of Catholics. The Orange magistracy would refuse certificates to Catholics, which they would grant to the lowest of their own class. The repeal agitation would, no doubt, be made the pretence for this policy, but the repeal agitation sprang from the neglect of Parliament to keep the solemn promise made in 1834 "to remove all just causes of complaint." What cause of complaint had been removed? If they desired to maintain the Union, they must legislate for Ireland as they did for England. If they did not, Ireland would be justified in demanding an Irish Parliament. No man valued British connection more than he did, but it might be purchased at too high a price; and it would be purchased at such a price if it involved the slavery of the Irish people.

Lord Clements complained that this bill had been defended on the false pretence that outrages were on the increase in Ireland. During the last two years Agrarian crimes had greatly diminished. And were there no outrages in England? Look at what had happened in the manufacturing districts. Look at the repeated attempts on the Queen's life in London. He reminded Parliament, in language which time has not robbed of its significance, that when murders were committed in England they were attributed to madmen, but in Ireland they were systematically attributed to the Catholics. He knew no people who were so easily governed as his fellow-countrymen. He lived in a distressed district where there were few resident proprietors, and where excitement prevailed in consequence of an unfortunate extermination,[1] yet when he asked to have arms surrendered they were at once given up.

[1] "Extermination" had become the familiar phrase for clearing the tenantry off an estate.

Coercion, he continued, had surely had sufficient trial in Ireland. From 1796 to 1802 an Insurrection Act was in force; from 1803 to 1805 martial law was established; the Insurrection Act was again in force from 1807 to 1810, and from 1814 to 1818, and from 1822 to 1823, and from 1823 to 1825. There it stopped; but then came courts-martial; then a mitigated Coercion Act from 1834 to 1835. In addition to this litany of restrictions the Habeas Corpus had been suspended three times since the Union. Had these experiments been so successful that it was expedient to renew them? The Yeomanry Corps in the North, which was composed in a large degree of Orangemen, the labourers and dependents of the gentry, and which admitted no Catholics, had been armed by the Crown; and when the Crown desired to withdraw the arms these loyal Protestants refused to surrender them. And these arms the bill of the Government designed to leave with their present possessors.

Practical objections like these might well cause a deliberative assembly to pause; Mr Shiel, however, carried the controversy into higher regions of thought. His main objection to the measure was the distinction which it created between England and Ireland.

Canning had scoffingly exclaimed: "Repeal the Union, restore the Heptarchy." But suppose Parliament maintained one law in what was once the kingdom of Mercia, and another law in what was once the kingdom of Kent—that in one the Bill of Rights was regarded as the inviolable charter of liberty, and on the other an Arms Bill was imposed, by which the elementary principles of British freedom were set at nought; suppose this, and even the restoration of the Heptarchy might cease to be impossible. It was quite certain Englishmen would not endure such an Arms Act in their own country. In 1819 England was in a perilous condition; a revolt was projected, and large bodies of men were drilled nightly in the use of arms. In this emergency an English Arms Act was passed, and passed by Lord Castlereagh, who served his apprenticeship in Ireland, yet it was comprised in a single page, while the bill before them was a whole volume of elaborate coercion. Yet the English measure was vehemently denounced by Lord Grey in one House and by Mr Brougham in the other. The Henry Brougham of that day exclaimed, "Am I an Englishman? I begin to doubt it when measures so abhorrent to the first principles of British liberty are audaciously propounded to us." The Brougham of that day, like Chatham when America was coerced, predicted and encouraged resistance; he hoped that the people would rise up in a simultaneous revolt

and sweep away the Government by which so great a sacrilege upon the Constitution had been perpetrated.

The Radicals swelled the outcry. Mr Hume pronounced the bill nothing less than a measure to degrade freemen, and affirmed that during the last two years there had been more murders in England than in Ireland. And Mr Charles Buller bade them take courage to be generous from the case of Canada, where feelings of no less heat were promptly allayed by a conciliatory policy. In Canada a ministry had been appointed who sympathised with the people, while in Ireland a ministry was appointed from the ranks of the minority alone. Let them place themselves in the position of an Irish Catholic, subject to an Orange administration, not because Ireland had changed her mind about parties, but because England had changed her mind; and could they wonder that Irish Catholics desired a domestic legislature?

The Attorney-General for Ireland asked the House to remember, when the Opposition clamoured for justice to Ireland as an alternative to Repeal, what impossible measures this policy called justice to Ireland included. It included the abolition of the Established Church, the concession of manhood suffrage, and vote by ballot, fixity of tenure for Irish tenants, and the abolition of grand jury cess. What was the use of arguing with a people who made demands like these, which never could be conceded? This was the judgment of Mr T. B. C. Smith, sitting on the Treasury bench beside men who were destined to accomplish the reforms he thought most improbable; and there are always Mr Smiths in Parliament who believe in no change till the day before it is accomplished.

Mr Wyse, who often threw upon a public question some searching light from the student's lamp, read a warning from a great philosophical historian, which might with advantage be emblazoned on the walls of the chamber in Downing Street where Cabinet Councils deliberate.

> "Should England," says Niebuhr, "not change her conduct, Ireland may still for a long period belong to her; but not always; and the loss of that country is the death-day not only of her greatness but her very existence."

And Lord Palmerston uttered a reflection which, in the mouth of a statesman who made his convictions the basis of his action, might have been the seed of a great policy. He reminded the House that Lord Stanley had recently declared that it was not worth while maintaining the connection with Canada unless her confidence and affection could

be won; and he begged them reflect how much truer was this sentiment with respect to Ireland.[1]

The Arms Bill was debated for three nights before the second reading, and when it was committed it was fought clause by clause. Repeated amendments were moved, and divisions taken on the most objectionable provisions. The English Radicals steadily co-operated with the Irish members in obstructing its progress, and nearly three months elapsed before the bill emerged from Committee. The Government could only coerce Ireland at the cost of sacrificing the business of a session; and their second stroke did not promise to be much more successful than the first.

O'Connell was naturally encouraged by this unexpected diversion in his favour, and by the manifest embarrassment of his opponents. County meetings were multiplied, and each new meeting aimed to surpass its predecessor in the extent of the attendance and the importance of the recruits. The *Times* described them as "Monster Meetings." The title was accepted by the people, and every county was eager for its turn to hold a monster meeting.

The county of Kilkenny met early in June. Kilkenny is eminently historic ground. The marble city was the seat of the Catholic Parliament which, under the title of a Confederation, ruled three of the four provinces during the contest between Charles I. and the Houses. And the population are descendants of men who followed the Butlers through many a stormy campaign, and thrice recruited the armies of the Confederation. Speaking to this audience O'Connell's language became more threatening and defiant than any he had yet employed.

"They stood that day," he said, "at the head of a group of men sufficient, if they underwent military discipline, to conquer Europe. Wellington never had such an army. There was not at Waterloo on both sides as many brave and energetic men. However, they were not disciplined; but tell them what to do, and you would have them disciplined in an hour. They were as well able to walk in order after a band as if they wore red coats. They were as able to be submissive to the Repeal Wardens, or anybody else told to take care of them, as if they were called sergeants or captains. . . . But the Repealers disclaimed physical force, for they relied on the legal and peaceful enthusiasm of the people."

Cork is the Yorkshire of Ireland in extent, population, and resources. On the 11th of June this great county met at Mallow. The attendance was immense; it was estimated by the newspapers at half a million, and was at any rate great beyond all modern precedent. The Gov-

[1] Speech on the motion to commit the bill.

ernment had despatched a squadron of Hussars and two companies of infantry to keep the peace. But the peace was not endangered. The utmost order and good humour prevailed. At a banquet which followed O'Connell spoke of consultations held by the Cabinet to arrest the Repeal movement, and indicated that coercion was about to be attempted. Commenting on this intention, he used language so menacing that it might properly have preceded an immediate rising of the nation in arms. It was afterwards known as the "Mallow Defiance."

"Do you know I never felt such a loathing for speechifying as I do at present? The time is coming when we must be doing. Gentlemen, you may learn the alternative to live as slaves or die as freemen. No! you will not be freemen if you be not perfectly in the right and your enemies in the wrong. I think I perceive a fixed disposition on the part of our Saxon traducers to put us to the test. The efforts already made by them have been most abortive and ridiculous. In the midst of peace and tranquillity they are covering our land with troops. Yes, I speak with the awful determination with which I commenced my address, in consequence of news received this day. There was no House of Commons on Thursday, for the Cabinet was considering what they should do, not for Ireland, but against her. But, gentlemen, as long as they leave us a rag of the Constitution, we will stand on it. We will violate no law, we will assail no enemy; but you are much mistaken if you think others will not assail you. (A Voice—'We are ready to meet them'). To be sure you are. Do you think I suppose you to be cowards or fools?"

He put the case that the Union was destructive to England instead of Ireland, and demanded whether Englishmen under such circumstances would not insist on its repeal.

"What are Irishmen," he asked, "that they should be denied an equal privilege? Have we not the ordinary courage of Englishmen? Are we to be called slaves? Are we to be trampled underfoot? Oh! they shall never trample me at least ('No, no'). I say they may trample me, but it will be my dead body they will trample on, not the living man."

Every poignant sentence uttered by the orator was confirmed by the vehement applause of the audience, and afterwards largely confirmed by the more deliberate judgment of readers throughout the island. For the declaration amounted only to this, that if the ordinary right of citizens to meet and petition for the redress of wrongs was about to be violated in Ireland in his person, he would resist the violation, and if need be, die in resisting it. It was a promise framed in the very spirit of popular liberty; and England was free and powerful because Eliot and Pym and a long line of successors, down to the Ministers who had encouraged Birmingham to menace the House of Lords in defence of

the Reform Bill, had made similar promises and kept them. No single incident in the Repeal movement contributed so much as this declaration to possess the popular mind with the conviction that the nation would be called to arms whenever the necessity arose. To repress captious objectors, who considered the Leader somewhat too old for a campaign, the *Pilot*, a little before the Mallow speech, reminded the country that O'Connell was only sixty-eight, whereas at Clontarf Brian Borhoime was eighty-eight.

To commemorate this transaction the Repeal Association commissioned Hogan to prepare a colossal statue of the Leader in the attitude in which he delivered the defiance; and it was ordered that, to hand down the pledge to posterity, its pedestal should bear the inscription—"*They may trample upon me, but if they do, it shall not be on the living man, but upon my dead body.*"[1] And they did wisely according to their knowledge. It was a sentiment worthy to be engraved upon Parian stone, and held in perpetual remembrance, if it expressed the settled purpose of a great soul.

A fortnight later, in the same county, in the presence of O'Connell, one of its representatives in Parliament, who inherited the blood and the creed of Edmund Burke, employed language vibrating with the same passion. Mr Burke Roche[2] was at this period a young man of fortune, in the prime of manhood, and graced with the physical gifts of vigour and comeliness which delight the popular eye.

"There has been," he said, "something like a declaration of war against the Irish people. I hope they are not mad enough to go to war with the tranquil people of Ireland (A voice—'Let them if they dare.') Yes, I say, if they dare attack the people, the people are prepared. If they dare to invade the constitutional rights of the Irish people we will be prepared to meet them."

At the banquet on the same evening Mr Roche renewed his warning—

"We will adopt every constitutional means to prevent our country being enslaved and our homes desolated. And when they infringe on rights so dear and feelings so sacred, then it will be time to take our course. My mind is fully made up as to that course, but this is not the time to state it."

After this deliberate language, the people confidently believed that if the English Minister attempted coercion, Mr Roche, at the head of

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[1] The statue was duly chiselled, and stands in the Royal Exchange, Dublin, but the proposed inscription was judiciously omitted.

[2] Afterwards Lord Fermoy.

the freeholders of his great county, distributed into troops and battalions, would bar the way. And there is little reason to doubt, far as he afterwards strayed from his first faith, that in raising these hopes he did not deliberately intend to disappoint them. He would have followed his leader into danger, but he had neither the depth of conviction nor the strength of will which coerces a man to shape a course for himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

YOUNG IRELAND AT WORK.

WHILE these conspicuous transactions occupied the public stage, work which has left more lasting results employed Davis and his friends in the shade. Among the tasks he had set himself was to win back his own class to the national cause. The spell exercised by a small body of men moved by strong conviction was signally illustrated at that time by a cluster of scholars who from the cloisters of Oxford were transforming the Church of England; on the continent one branch of the Bourbons had been driven out of France at the point of the pen, and the branch in possession lived in constant fear of a handful of journalists and advocates, before whom they finally succumbed. The incidents now to be narrated furnish another illustration, scarcely less instructive, of the mesmerism which conviction exercises over interest and prejudice.

To win the ear of the Protestant middle class to a cause upon which O'Connell's name was indelibly stamped, public harangues and musters of the people were useless, for prejudice cannot be taken by assault. But it may be sapped and mined. Among every generation of the Protestants since the Boyne there were some ashamed of an ascendancy which had so little to say in its justification; and among the young there were now many who felt the want of a country, and listened eagerly to stories of Irish soldiers and statesmen; but to get them to act publicly on their opinions might well seem hopeless. How the one man of genius for whom the occasion has long waited does his appointed work when he comes is always a puzzle to his contemporaries. No catalogue of the things he undertook, or induced others to undertake, enables us to comprehend it; they represent the sum of his labours only as rude dots on a map represent fertile islands and populous cities, leaving to the imagination or memory the task of turning the bare symbols into landscapes and pictures. But we cannot altogether dispense with the catalogue.

There was a common pride among Irishmen in their great orators, and Davis projected a series of the Orators of Ireland, with historical introductions and careful editing, and launched the project by an edition of Curran, which has since been the delight of two generations of students. He induced MacNevin to edit with great care the State Trials preceding the Union, as materials for the history of that period. On the neutral ground of ancient history and native art, Unionists and Nationalists could meet without alarm, and he laboured to accustom men who had long stood apart to act together in this field, confident that the habit would grow. The Archæological Society and the Royal Irish Academy began to exhibit unusual activity, and the interest created by these Societies in the early annals of this country prepared the educated class after a little to support private projects of the same nature. The "Annals of the Four Masters," the great storehouse of early Irish history, had never been translated from the Irish. In France or Germany work of this character is done at the cost of the State, but in Ireland, at that time, such a method was hopeless. Two translations—one, elaborate and costly, edited by John O'Donovan and issued by the publishers of the University, and another cheap, and too precipitate for accuracy, edited by Mr Owen Connellan—began to appear simultaneously. MacGeoghegan's "History," Barrington's "Rise and Fall of the Irish Nation," and Forman's "Estimate of the Military Resources of Ireland," long out of print, were reissued under Davis's advice. It may be confidently asserted that it was to the creation of a public opinion ready to welcome them that the publication of costly works like the "Annals" and Mr Petrie's "Round Towers," which threw an unexpected light upon Pagan and Christian antiquities, and Dr Kane's "Industrial Resources of Ireland," which soon followed, was mainly attributable. The Repeal Association, framed for more homely purposes, submitted to the same impulse. A Committee, of which Davis was chairman, recommended prizes to be granted for paintings and drawings on Irish subjects treated in a national spirit, and for engravings and lithographs from national pictures. And he furnished in the *Nation* a list of suitable subjects for historical treatment, from Ollamh Fodlah presenting his laws, down to O'Connell advocating the rights of Ireland before the Dublin Corporation. The first numbers of a pictorial history of Ireland, consisting of memorable historic scenes painted by Henry MacManus and narrated by John Cornelius O'Callaghan, addressed itself to the eyes and imagination of the class who read least.[1] But it was no longer

[1] Henry MacManus had been an Orangeman in early manhood, but he was a

for any purpose of offence that history was ransacked, but for examples of public spirit and public services, and for warning against national sins and errors; for it is as mad and wicked to extinguish the light history throws on the past as to extinguish a beacon on rocks where a navy may founder. At a later period premiums were offered for suitable designs for Catholic, Protestant, and Presbyterian churches, and for Town Halls, Libraries, Mechanics' Institutes, and other public edifices, which a national Government would have promoted. An architect, who has since built more Celtic churches than any man of Irish birth since the Goban Saer taught our ancestors to construct the Round Towers, told me he caught the first impulse to revive the Irish Gothic in ecclesiastical buildings from the *Nation* at that period.[1] Help in money and in experience was proffered to assist the publication of genuine Irish airs, arranged for the popular bands, after the example of Hungary, the Tyrol, and other countries aiming to be free. A choral society for the middle class was established; old airs were collected, and new airs composed. John O'Daly, a bookseller on a small scale, but a man of genuine enthusiasm, whose labours recalled the simple peasant patriotism of Old Mortality, after consultation with Davis, commenced the issue of the "Jacobite Relics of Ireland" in the native tongue, in a shape and at a price designed for the bulk of the people. And Nicholas Kearney, another enthusiast, founded an Hibernian Society at Drogheda, to carry the new light among the millions to whom English was an unknown tongue. The ballads and songs of the *Nation*, however, were the agent which produced the most signal and immediate results. A collection from the verses of the first three months was published under the title of the "Spirit of the Nation," and attained an immediate popularity.

Work of this nature was so new and strange in an Irish movement that it compelled attention. The first recognition as usual came from a distance. The Paris *National* constantly applauded the writers of the *Nation* as men of kindred race, and striving like Frenchmen for liberty. They became so well known in Paris that when a new journal was established, in the interest of the democratic Opposition, it was

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fellow-townsman of mine, and social intercourse with the Young Irelanders won him to national opinions. The only portrait of Davis painted during his lifetime, and effective portraits of Dillon, MacNevin, and some of their associates, were from the pencil of MacManus. In later years he has been Professor of Painting to the Royal Hibernian Academy and Master of the School of Arts in Dublin.

[1] J. J. M'Carthy, M.R.I.A., R.H.A.

by a few of the least conspicuous of the Irish peers. The tone of this meeting was fiercely anti-national, but more truculently anti-Catholic. Mr Butt, who was the principal speaker, proclaimed and exaggerated the ability of the *Nation*. He read long extracts from its ballads to prove that the writers aimed at a separation from England, and had created and directed the dangerous spirit which was abroad. After these criticisms the printer could scarcely produce the little volume as fast as it was demanded, and rival editions were issued in Boston and New York. From that date to this, an edition has been required every year; and those who are familiar with the facts will scarcely deny that the "Spirit of the Nation" has influenced the mind of Ireland as deeply and permanently as the poems of Robert Burns influenced the mind of Scotland; a comparison however which does not imply any equality of intrinsic merit between the books.[1]

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[1] The little volume began to be furtively enquired after in London on its first appearance. "Monckton Milnes" (so an Irish member of some mark in London wrote at this time to John O'Connell), "Monckton Milnes has just asked me to get him half a dozen copies of the *Songs of the Nation* which he is afraid to send for in his own name. Send them to me by post and one for myself, letting me know the cost. These songs are very much admired here; who is the author?—does he wish his name kept secret? By-the-by that critique on Lever the other day in the *Nation* was very good. Whoever did it I am much obliged to him." John O'Connell told his correspondent that the poems were not by one writer but by half-a-dozen, and the handling of Lever was by Gavan Duffy. A little later, when the Trustees of the British Museum sent a peremptory notice that their legal right to a copy of every book published in the Empire would be enforced in the case of a sixpenny brochure issued from a newspaper office, it could not be doubted that the publication had reached its mark. It is likely enough that unexpectedness was one of the incidents which secured the verses so generous a reception; but Lord Macaulay's estimate of them is a judgment which will doubtless be accepted as adequate and independent. In a letter written a couple of years later, when they were first collected in a Library Edition, he gives them as high praise as can reasonably be claimed for them, mixed with such disapproval of their main purpose as was to be expected under the circumstances.

"ALBANY, LONDON, *26th May* 1845.

"SIR—I have just found on my table a volume of songs accompanied by a letter from you. Some of those songs I already know, and I have been much struck by their energy and beauty. Those which I have not yet read possess, I doubt not, similar merit. But I cannot refrain from saying with how much pain the pleasure which I have received from those compositions has been mingled. I would entreat you to consider whether genius be worthily employed in inflaming national animosity between two countries which, from physical causes such as no political revolution can remove, must always be either blessings or curses to each other. For your great courtesy to myself I thank you. And I beg you to do me the honour of accepting some volumes which I have requested my publisher, Mr Longman, to transmit to you.—I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient servant, T. B. MACAULAY.

"C. G. DUFFY, Esq."

Somewhat later Mr Emerson Tennant, then a member of the Peel Government, whose acquaintance I made far away from the field of party politics, and whom

Mr Butt's meeting moved Davis, for once, from his habitual equanimity. He was disgusted with the greed and hypocrisy of the Orange Squires, who placed their resistance to nationality on the ground of their duty to Protestantism. It was not their exorbitant rents, or their convenient monopolies, these gentlemen were guarding, in keeping Ireland poor and divided, but their holy religion. He warned them in a gust of indignation, of which there is no other instance in his life, that there was a remedy for this sort of thing, though the national party were loath to employ it: "three months' agitation in a certain direction would make them petitioners for admission into workhouses of which they were now *ex officio* guardians."

There was one person to whom this chorus of praise was not too welcome. O'Connell was deficient in a disposition essential to a leader; he did not foster conspicuous merit among his adherents by recognising and applauding it. Sheil, Woulfe, Wyse, and many men of lesser note had withdrawn from him under a sense of wounded self-respect. And it was sometimes felt that even to the illustrious dead he yielded but scant recognition, as if he were impatient of any pretensions which distracted attention from the great central figure in modern Irish history. At the meeting of the Association immediately after Mr Butt's speech he alarmed his friends and stirred his enemies into chuckles of malicious laughter, by expressing his surprise that the learned gentleman had thought fit to entertain his audience with "the poor rhymed dulness" of the *Nation*. But there were competent critics in his domestic circle, who had an interest in setting him right, and before the week closed he took occasion to remark, at Athlone, that Alderman Butt had recently repeated "a number of songs out of the *Nation*, and very good songs they were." When I read the Association speech I asked Dillon, who was among the least splenetic of men, "Is O'Connell

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(misplaced, I think, by accident among bigots) I regarded as intrinsically an enlightened and generous Irish gentleman, bore a still stronger testimony.

"I look upon the 'Spirit of the Nation,'" wrote Emerson Tennant, "as one of the most remarkable evidences of Irish genius which has been struck forth by these remarkable times; and I shall carry it with me to the Land of the Sun as a proof of what we can do in the land of the West. . . As to the *Nation*, do send it to me. I shall value it too, because I think that in the pursuit of a splendid delusion you have so conducted that paper as to call forth an emanation of Irish *mind* so exalted and so pure in tone, and so inspiriting in its influence, as to be without a parallel in the annals of the Press."

In the first number of the famous *League* the little volume was carefully reviewed, and the new Free Trade party found much to commend in the hatred of monopoly sung with such feeling and vigour.

jealous of the *Nation?*" "Jealous of the *Nation!*" he replied, laughing; "why, he's jealous of Brian Borhoime!"

To the positive teaching of facts and principles Davis constantly longed to add the subtler teaching of the dramatic poet and the painter of the past in fiction. Irish history is full of picturesque incidents and strong characters: it blends with the career of Spain, Austria, and France, at great epochs, and in later times of America and Asia, and he believed it contained inspiration certain to move an artist who came in contact with it. To Maddyn he wrote:—

"Have you ever tried dramatic writing? Do you know Taylor's 'Philip Van Artevelde,' and Griffin's 'Gisippus'? I think them the two best serious dramas written in English since Shakespeare's time.[1] A drama equal to either of them on an Irish subject would be useful and popular to an extent you can hardly suppose. . . . Ireland is really ripening, that is my chief pleasure. I have too many pursuits to enjoy any of them very keenly, save for an hour of exultation now and then."

And again on the subject of an historical romance he wrote to the same friend—

"The 'Boyne Water' (a novel by Banim) has excellent things, such as the scenery at the Boyne and Fairhead, and the starvation of Derry, which he exaggerates; but upon the great political elements then at work he looked casually and unwisely. I wish to heaven someone would attempt Irish historical fiction. Griffin's 'Invasion' and some of his short tales were excellent; there is a novel too called 'The Adventurers,' written by I know not whom upon the wars of Hugh O'Neal in Elizabeth's time; but besides these and the 'Boyne Water' I know nothing readable of the class. There is a thought in the letter of Griffin, recently published in the *Nation*, that to paint Ireland struggling incessantly and unsuccessfully, now beaming with hope, now crouching in despair, still never crushed and never quite triumphant, would suit some master painter of history. Fiction could not deal with such a long period of this Enceladus history; but it could take Ireland between two crises, palpitating between the sorrows of some defeat and beginning to be prepared for another strife. The characters on whose loves and hates the plot rested should not be historical, for such a work should not reach any decisive time in our history. It should wind up with private fortunes, leaving the public and such public men as were introduced still under the mountain. This you'll say is to paint despair—say rather perseverance, for those who struggled unsuccessfully did not struggle in vain; they lived vigorously and died well; and at all events this *is* our history for three hundred years past, and must be told. The weight of that past is upon us now, and sanguine as

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[1] "I know nothing of Griffin except what everybody knows. Serjeant Talfourd, some time since, before several literary men, spoke of Griffin's genius with enthusiasm—he admired its 'stern reality.' Such were his words. On the 'Collegians' his fame depends. I think it is, as a mere work of genius, the most dramatic fiction I ever read. In catholic power of sympathetic appreciation he is unrivalled."—Maddyn to Davis.

I am that this country could be rescued, I often doubt if it will, for history casts shadows on my hopes."

If Davis expected a great creative artist to arise in the midst of political turmoil, and to become the agent of political passions, he was hoping for what was impossible; but it was not vain to expect that historic tales and dramatic sketches, filled with the same spirit as the Irish ballads, might be born of the same union of enthusiasm and ability; and this is perhaps all he anticipated.

At this time there was no desire or thought of a separate party. There was simply the inevitable difference between the new generation and the old; a difference which the fondest father may detect in the most devoted son. The young men naturally lived a good deal together, and by social sympathy rather than from any set purpose, they had fallen into the habit of meeting once a week at a frugal supper, seasoned by wit and friendship and generous hopes, which make these meetings still a divine memory to the survivors. The weekly supper took place at their houses in turn, and served in the end as a council for the political work of the Association and the literary work of the newspaper. Some among them wrote but never spoke in the public assemblies, some spoke but never wrote, and a few who did neither helped the common cause by kindred services in the liberal arts and professions, or in society, where the new songs began to be heard, as Moore's had been heard a generation earlier. And two or three young dandies sought to give a keener relish to life by fluttering occasionally in and out of their councils, like butterflies sunning themselves on the margin of the seething sea. It was at these suppers the songs of the *Nation* were first sung, that new projects and suggestions were debated and reduced to practical form, and the frolic and banter which made "Answers to Correspondents" the first column read in the *Nation*, were often merely crumbs that fell from the supper-table.

A common stock of ideas and common aims and enjoyments scarcely contribute more to consolidate a distinct party than a common designation, which amounts to a sort of enlistment and uniform. An English journalist, who thought he saw in the writers of the *Nation* a mimicry either of the Young England party then making itself heard in Parliament, or of the continental parties of young men which preceded it, spoke of them jeeringly as Young Ireland, and there was enough superficial resemblance to make the name stick. It owed its currency, somewhat, however, to MacNevin's desire to imitate the Dutch "Gueux," and assume as a distinction the nickname invented as a reproach. His

JOHN O'HAGAN, Barrister-at-Law.
Dublin, 1850.

MR. JUSTICE O'HAGAN.
Dublin, 1886.

Believe me ever

John O'Hagan

comrades discouraged the experiment, but the phrase slipped now and then into his speeches, and in the end, as we shall see, he wrote an elaborate defence of his friends and their opinions, and reprinted it as a pamphlet under the title of "Young Ireland." We begged him to suppress this manifesto, from obvious motives of prudence, and it was withheld from the booksellers, but he reserved a hundred copies for private circulation, and the mischief was more effectually done than by the most studied publicity.

At the beginning Davis, Dillon, John Pigot, John O'Hagan, and the editor composed the weekly meeting. John Pigot was a singularly handsome boy, for he still looked a boy at that time. Dark hair, dark eyes lighted with enthusiasm, an olive complexion, a certain sweet sternness, and the bearing of a cavalier, constituted him a woman's ideal of a patriot. When a satirical novelist made "Young Ireland" his theme, Pigot was the hero he chose. He had notable diligence in gathering recruits among the socially better class, and in promoting literary and artistic projects, and he loved Davis with a devotion which made labour easy to him; but his gifts were graceful and attractive rather than original or solid.[1] John O'Hagan, his fast friend and fellow-student—they were both in training for the Bar—was about the same age, but there was no other point of resemblance. A boyish face, a frank smile and a readiness to engage in *badinage*, seemed at first view to promise no extraordinary endowments. But behind these lay a judgment and sagacity notable at any age, and marvellous in one so young. He was the safest in council, the most moderate in opinion, the most considerate in temper, of the young men; and after a time, any of them would have had recourse to him, next after Davis, in a personal difficulty needing sympathy and discretion. His only fault, MacNevin used to say, was that he was constantly disturbing your judgment of him by winning success in a quite new direction for which you were in no way prepared.[2] At the period I now speak of MacNevin, Barry, Denny Lane, and D. F. MacCarthy were added to the weekly conference.

MacCarthy, like Charles Lamb when he was the associate of Hazlitt and Hunt, loved the men more than he shared their political passions.

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[1] Mr Pigot, who was eldest son of the Chief Baron, went to India in recent years, and after a prosperous career at the Bar there, died prematurely soon after his return to Ireland.

[2] Mr O'Hagan, in later times Mr Justice O'Hagan, and first chairman of the Land Commission in Ireland.

He was a law student, and believed he was destined for a career at the Bar, but he was essentially a poet and man of letters, happy in his study, charming in society, where his spontaneous humour was the delight of his associates, but never thoroughly at home in the courts, in the council room, or on the platform. Lane had a singularly prolific mind, which threw out showers of speculation, covering a wide field of art, philosophy, and practical politics. He was always ready to project, and took the keen interest in the labours of his friends which constitutes a good comrade; but he could not be got to apply himself to any special task. He spoke seldom, and wrote still more rarely. One of his friends (C. G. D.) remonstrated with him as "dear lazy Lane"; and Davis (with whom he was a constant companion), writing to Maddyn, declared that he was a fine fellow, "but hardly selfish enough for a great success—unless as an apostle." Friends more or less in sympathy were occasionally invited as guests, and John and Wilson Gray, R. D. Williams, Father Meehan, and various other young men came in this character. Occasionally the weekly supper was replaced by an excursion, usually on Sunday, to some national monument or historic site within easy reach of Dublin, and the party dined together at the close of the day. To these excursions the invitations were sometimes numerous, and artists and writers who would have been loath to call themselves Repealers applauded the national songs and shared the spirit which animated them. There sometimes we found serviceable recruits; and recruits were always welcome, on the same condition that Robin Hood imposed on his merry men—that they could match him at his own weapons. Davis was the soul of these meetings: he was so helpful with his stores of knowledge, so simple and gay in his hours of relaxation. Whatever subject one of us was studying, we could count upon Davis to suggest the essential books and furnish more serviceable help from the living library of his memory and judgment. The variety of questions he had thought out was a constant marvel to his comrades. "He is like a Cairo orange," said MacNevin, "puncture him anywhere and out flows a succulent stream." When a comrade neglected work to which he was pledged, Davis, though the task of making good the deficiency often fell upon him, forgave him with a smile and a shake of the head. When one of them came to him with some crude or extravagant proposal (it was a time when these novelties grew very plentifully), his good-humoured "Do you think so?" rarely failed to make the querist reconsider his opinion. With an intimate friend

Denis Florence MacCarthy.

his negative was more decisive. "You had better," he said, laughing, to one of them who brought him a bundle of explosive literature, "you had better set up a journal of your own for this sort of thing, and call it 'Pigot's Penny Pike.'" His books were so much in the hands of his associates that one of them named them "The Celt's Circulating Library," "The Celt" being the signature commonly appended to his verses.

A man's character may be read in his library. Davis's books, which might be carried in a single waggon, were as miscellaneous as his reading, but almost as motley as an old bookstall. Sismondi and Blackstone stood between Thierry and Percy's "Reliques"; Flaxman's "Illustrations" and Retzch's "Outlines" were flanked by Carte's "Ormond" and Paul Louis Courier. "Boulter's Letters," Béranger, Wolfe Tone, Landor's "Imaginary Conversations," a "Manual of Artillery," or a treatise on military equitation, jostled "Philip van Artevelde" and a rare collection of "Street Ballads"; and the fresh and dainty volumes of the Archæological Society sprawled among Anti-Union pamphlets and the incredible Anti-Irish tracts of the Commonwealth. But there was order in the disorder; he could put his hand on the volume he wanted without a moment's hesitation.

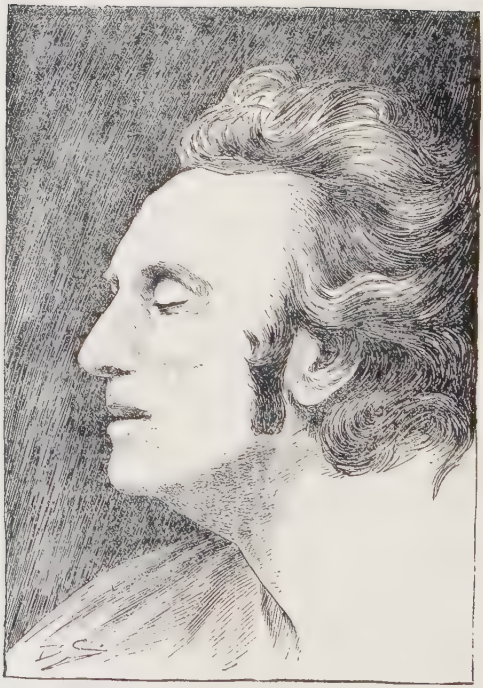
MacCarthy's library formed a strange contrast with Davis's. The books were as trim and neat as the gilded favourites of a boudoir; not a gap from the floor to the ceiling, no room apparently for another volume, and one less would spoil the graceful uniformity. No scholarly litter defaced the poet's bower. The step-ladder, MacNevin used to say, had the air of a gentleman, and the very duster a touch of quality. At first sight it might pass for the boudoir of a "Blue"; but when you came to examine the books they were not of the class accustomed to be fondled by a fashionable lady. Dante, Rabelais, Goethe, Calderon, Boccaccio stood in the van of a long line of illustrious foreigners. Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson and Spenser, often handled, but looking as fresh and dainty as the last "Forget-me-not," Shelley in many editions, poets of all nations, and scarcely a single volume of the working library of Davis.

MacNevin's differed from both the others; it was a library of special studies. When his attention was fixed on any era, or question, he supplied himself immediately with the leading books, and studied them with intense industry. But if the inquiry was interrupted, as it was very liable to be, it was sometimes never resumed; and one volume,

carefully noted, stood perhaps next to its fellow whose leaves were still uncut. There was a large basis of law—for his father and brother, who were attorneys, did not allow him altogether to neglect the Four Courts—and a liberal supply of Irish books, some of them precious for their rarity or their pedigree (they came out of historic collections or had belonged to memorable men), but the bulk of the library was English literature and history, carefully studied and often curiously annotated. Though MacNevin was erratic in his fancies, his habits were orderly and even precise. His numerous family of special studies never got intermixed; and Lane insisted that they lived like a French household in "apartments" under the same roof, but having no common *salon*, and never interchanging visits.

A scrap from one of Davis's notes to me at this time will indicate how little he was a mere politician in his studies:—"I leave with you a 'Hesiod' ['Flaxman's Illustrations'], and you can send me the volume you have. I think 'The Golden Age,' and 'The Carrying of Pandora by Mercury,' two of the most beauteous and true compositions I ever saw, and well worth ten 'Spirits of the Nation.' Glory to Flaxman, though he was a Saxon!" A man might do all these things and be detested, but Davis did them and was universally loved. A human being so free from vanity or selfishness it has never been my good fortune to encounter, and the result was that his influence and his labours excited no jealousy.

MacNevin was a delightful talker, not of the order who harangue or lecture over the dinner-table, but delightful from the quickness of his fancy. His playful and enjoying nature, and the training he had given it, caused him to be likened to Sheil, but he had more heart and less imagination than Sheil. Among his comrades he was like a boy, as joyous and caressing, but sometimes as wayward and exacting. At the University he had been a close friend of Mr Keogh, and he was still liable to irregular fits of submission to that adverse influence, for as one of his admirers declared—"Willy Keogh could coax the birds off the bushes"—and during these intervals he was disturbed and unhappy. He was averse from details and regular labour, but he had fits of devouring industry. It is scarcely possible to conceive two honourable men united by the *idem velle* and *idem nolle* who were more inherently different than Thomas Davis and Thomas MacNevin. "If I had Davis's power of concentration," the latter wrote to me at this time, "or what I consider the highest of all qualities, a sense of the reality and worth of things, I might do something. But



JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN.

(*From a drawing, taken after death, by* SIR F. BURTON, R.A.)

Yours very sincerely

J. C. Mangan.

my convictions are not strong, my thoughts are mere reveries, and my fancy is so barren that if she had a handmaiden I would be entitled to proceed as the patriarchs did in case of sterility."

The man most essentially a poet among the writers of the *Nation* was Clarence Mangan. He was as truly born to sing deathless songs as Keats or Shelley; but he lived and died in a provincialised city, and his voice was drowned for a time in the roar of popular politics. He was so purely a poet that he shrank from all other exercise of his intellect. He cared little for political projects. He could never be induced to attend the weekly suppers, and knew many of his fellow-labourers only by name. He lived a secluded, unwholesome life, and when he emerged into daylight he was dressed in a blue cloak (mid-summer or mid-winter), and a hat of fantastic shape, under which golden hair as fine and silky as a woman's hung in unkempt tangles, and deep blue eyes lighted a face as colourless as parchment. He looked like the spectre of some German romance, rather than a living creature. He stole into the Editor's room once a week to talk over literary projects, but if any of my friends appeared he took flight on the instant. In earlier days I had spent many a night up to the small hours listening to his delightful monologues on poetry and metaphysics, but the animal spirits and hopefulness of vigorous young men oppressed him, and he fled from the admiration or sympathy of a stranger as others do from reproach or insult.

Williams at the outset was almost as shy as Mangan. On his earlier admission to the weekly suppers I can recall the picture of the sensitive student, reared in the country, intoxicated with the new pleasure of brilliant talk, but too modest to open his lips. They opened to some purpose, however, in the end; he never, indeed, became easy in his manners, but he shot out at uncertain intervals sayings of wonderful humour and depth, which shook the table with applause and laughter.

> "Bliss in that dawn it was to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven."[1]

But the cardinal purpose of their confederacy was not to cultivate

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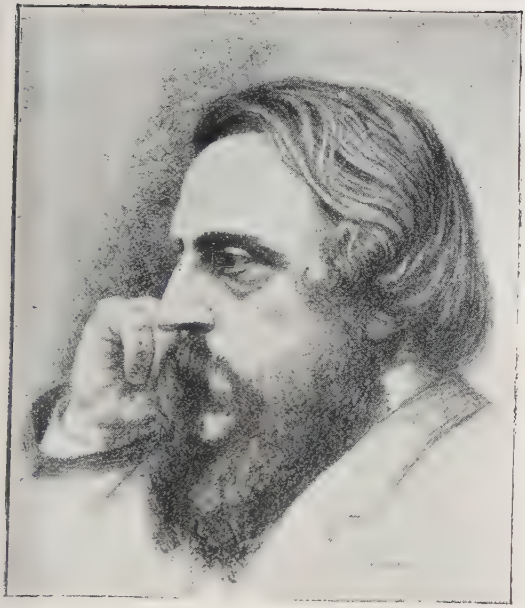
[1] Among the early recruits who have fallen completely out of the public memory were David Cangley, a young barrister, who had lived much in France, and enlivened our suppers with the songs of Béranger and Rouget de Lisle; and Henry O'Neill, also a barrister, but, unlike most of his associates, a man of fashion. They both died early. MacNevin used to designate them "the curled darlings of the *Nation*."

literature or philosophy, but to repeal, or, if that proved impracticable, to dissolve the Union. Among his associates, and in his private correspondence, Davis contended that the agencies which Grattan had employed would bring England to terms, if only the leaders were supported as Grattan had been supported by a nation resolved never to recede. All Gallic bravado about the necessity of baptizing the cause in blood was abhorrent to him. He was in spirit a soldier and statesman, not a demagogue. Let us have Repeal if Repeal can be won, he was accustomed to say; let us even have Federalism as a beginning, and to put the country on the right path. Let us get it by negotiation if possible; so even Tone desired to win it, rather than by arming his fellow-countrymen against each other.[1] Englishmen clamour for peace in Ireland, but peace is far more important to us than to them; for what we are wasting in agitation is the life of the nation, the divine energy which in other channels might make her prosperous and renowned. But it is idle to talk of success by negotiation, or by any other method unless we have beforehand determined, if negotiation should fail, to take the next inevitable step.

An objection which constantly confronted him was the fear of Catholic ascendancy in an Irish Parliament. The Protestants had used their power with merciless rapacity and cruelty, it was hard for them to believe the Catholics would be just and temperate. Another habitual objection was that he laboured in vain; an Irish nation might be desirable, but it was a waste of life to seek an end which could never be attained. On these points Davis opened his whole mind to Maddyn.

"The machinery at present working for Repeal could never, under circumstances like the present, achieve it; but circumstances must change. Within ten or fifteen years England must be in peril. Assuming this much, I argue thus. Modern Anglicism—*i.e.* Utilitarianism, the creed of Russell and Peel, as well as of the Radicals—this thing, call it Yankeeism or Englishism, which measures prosperity by exchangeable value, measures duty by gain, and limits desire to clothes, food, and respectability; this damned thing has come into Ireland under the Whigs, and is equally the favourite of the 'Peel' Tories. It is believed in the political assemblies in our cities, preached from our pulpits (always Utilitarian or persecuting); it is the very Apostles' Creed of the professions, and threatens to corrupt the lower classes,

[1] "May Ireland be a nation! May she win her independence by a free concession of her rights! for this, too, was the wish of his heart, though fate compelled him to forego it, and seek freedom with an armed hand."—Davis on "Tone," *Nation*, Oct. 22, 1843.



Cork, 1877.

London, 189[illegible].

who are still faithful and romantic. To use every literary and political engine against this seems to me the first duty of an Irish patriot who can foresee consequences. Believe me, this is a greater though not so obvious a danger as Papal supremacy. So much worse do I think it, that, sooner than suffer the iron gates of that filthy dungeon to close on us, I would submit to the certainty of a Papal supremacy; knowing that the latter should end in some twenty years—leaving the people mad it might be, but not sensual and mean. Much more willingly would I take the chance of a Papal supremacy, which even a few of us laymen could check, shake, and prepare (if not effect) the ruin of. Still more willingly would I (if Anglicanism, *i.e.* Sensualism, were the alternative) take the hazard of open war, sure that if we succeeded the military leaders would compel the bigots down, establish a thoroughly national Government, and one whose policy, somewhat arbitrary, would be anti-Anglican and anti-sensual; and if we failed it would be in our own power before dying to throw up huge barriers against English vices, and, dying, to leave example and a religion to the next age."

He answered objections of his friend on the difficulties of his task by enumerating the growing elements of power upon which we relied.

"You seem to me to underrate our resources. The Catholic population are more united, bold, and orderly than ever they were. Here are materials for defence or attack, civil or military. The hearty junction of the Catholic bishops is of the greatest value. The Protestants of the lower order are neutral; the land question and repeated disappointments from England have alienated them from their old views. Most of the educated Protestants now profess an ardent nationality, and say that if some pledge against a Catholic ascendancy could be given them they too would be Repealers. You will see by the accompanying paper that fourteen barristers, most of them men of good business, joined yesterday. Before a month we are likely to have as many lawyers as ever joined any decided agitation here. The Americans are constantly offering us men, money, and arms. . . . Crowds of soldiers and police are enrolled Repealers. These are some of our resources. The present agitation will not fail for want of statesmanship, though it may for want of energy. Even O'C. has looked very far ahead this time, and knows he cannot retreat. I think we can beat Peel. If we can quietly get a Federal Government I shall for one agree to it and support it. If not, then anything but what we are."

Maddyn warned him not to misapprehend the inaction of the Government.

"All parties here," he wrote, "are ready unsparingly to employ force, if you will persist in your resolution to plunge into a bloody civil war. The Irish think Peel is cowed because he holds back and does not obey the counsels of the ultra Tories. 'Twas so with Pitt in 1790—and subsequently. He did not go to war until he saw that it was absolutely necessary; and the moment he gave the word he regained his popularity with the governing public of England. Depend upon it that O'Connell will be defeated in this business."

"You in England," Davis wrote in reply, "quite overrate the likelihood of war here. We have the people as docile and exact in their obedience to us as possible. They see that discipline is the greatest element of success.

Unless the Government begin the contest, either with their own troops of with an Orange mob, there will be no fight for the present. We are making more way with the upper classes than you fancy. They will not yet, at least, join the Association, but many of them will join a Federalist party which is about being founded. If that Federalist party be managed by bold, clear-headed men it will impose its own terms on England in two years. We Repealers hold peace and war in our hands. O'Connell could in three months take possession of Ireland, but he is adverse, wisely, humanely adverse, to fighting, save in the last extremity. He prevailed in '29 by the power of fighting, not the practice of it; may he not do so again? You will say, 'No, for England is dead against us.' What's the proof of her being so? I see little; on the contrary, I believe a portion of the intelligence and half the populace of England will aid us, if things go on peaceably, as they are going. Do you see the provincial Press of England and Scotland? It is generally favourable; the Whigs, undesignedly perhaps, are serving us, and the Ministry and their Press are acting and writing so irresolutely and rashly that we can hardly fail to overcome them if we do not copy their blunders. Should sterner counsels prevail, they will come to the contest greatly weakened by what has passed, and we, some of us at least, know our duty and see our course. It may be very sad, but 'tis not very unpromising, as, were you here, I could satisfy you."

In sober truth Davis was as averse to war, if it could be honourably avoided, as Hampden or Washington, and as ready, if it could not, to wage it to the last gasp.

The writings of the young men as much perhaps as the speeches of O'Connell began to tell upon opinion in England. *Tait's Magazine*, then a vigorous organ of British democracy, declared that Repeal of the Union if demanded by the whole Irish people, must be conceded. The *Westminster Review*, which brought to the aid of the same party a larger culture and wider philosophy, warned the Government that Ireland, if only she pursued a constitutional course, could not fail to succeed. The old traditional notion that Irishmen were a sort of grown children to be coaxed or whipped at pleasure could not too soon be got rid of. Ireland had made the great political discovery of passive resistance, and accomplished the greatest national reform of a national vice the century had to show. Several of the more original and independent of the English newspapers took the same tone, notably the *Nonconformist*, under the management of Mr Miall, and the *Leeds Times*, under the management of Dr Smiles.

A few recruits dropped in from the Conservative party, enough to show that the solid mass was no longer immovable. Captain Mockler announced himself as a staunch Orangeman and also a staunch Repealer. From Stewartstown, one of the most Protestant districts in Ulster,

thirty Orangemen joined in a body. In Louth, Captain Seaver, representative of the Seavers of the Bog, a family noted for their devotion to Protestant ascendancy, became an active agitator for Repeal. Thirty years ago, he said, he had taken the oath of an Orangeman, three-and-forty years ago the oath of a Yeoman, and in demanding self-government for Ireland, he believed he was doing the duty equally of a loyal subject and a patriot. In the border country between north and south his accession was regarded as an evidence that hereditary quarrels, however bitter, might be composed. His immediate predecessor had been a Yeomanry captain in '98, and it was still told with a shudder that when a poor woman who fell under suspicion of disloyal pretences was asked what friend she had to give her a character, and answered that she had no friend but the Sav'ur of the world, the savage yeoman replied, "It would be more to the purpose to have a friend in Seaver of the Bog."

The dismissal and retirement of magistrates left the people in some districts without any local court in which they had confidence. In Canada, during the agitation under Papineau, a similar difficulty arose, and was met by the dismissed magistrates acting as arbitrators. Dr Gray proposed a nearly identical course in Ireland; he recommended that Arbitration Courts should be established in which the ex-justices and other suitable persons nominated by the association would decide all disputes submitted to them. The proposal was promptly adopted, and a code of instructions prepared. The people were assured that the decision of arbitrators was valid and final in the eyes of the law when both parties had signed a submission, and they were reminded that in these courts there would be no fees and no costs. Lord Ffrench and several of the most distinguished of the superseded magistrates expressed their willingness to act as arbitrators. Arbitration Courts immediately began to sit in some of the suburban districts, the people had recourse to them, and it was resolved to establish them by degrees in every Petty Sessions district in the country. At the same time the organisation was gradually strengthened and perfected by the general committee. There were wardens in more than half the parishes in the island, in regular correspondence with the Association, and baronial and provincial inspectors of wardens were appointed to secure vigilance, punctuality, and uniformity of action.

The popular courts of justice were followed by the proposal of a still bolder measure, the summoning of a quasi-popular legislature, to be called the Council of Three Hundred. In England and Scotland

delegates were elected for political or social purposes, and even by the most discontented and revolutionary section of the people, without any risk to the commonwealth; but in Ireland such elections were forbidden by law—a law passed by the Irish Parliament against the Catholics, and which the Imperial Parliament maintained in operation. O'Connell, who had much practice in driving, as he was accustomed to say, a coach and six through penal statutes, proposed to elude this one by assembling three hundred gentlemen in whom their neighbours had expressed their confidence, not by election, but by entrusting each of them with one hundred pounds subscribed for the Repeal Rent. The project excited sanguine hopes in Ireland. Two generations earlier the Volunteer army had sent Three Hundred delegates to Dungannon to confer on the state of the nation, and the result had been the legislative independence of Ireland and the first amendment of the Penal Laws. A little later Charlemont and Flood summoned Three Hundred delegates of the same Volunteers to Dublin to petition for Reform of the Irish Parliament, and it was a common belief in Ireland that had that Convention not been betrayed by its leaders, the Union would never have taken place. Three Hundred was the number of the Irish Parliament; and this assembly might, in effect, become a popular legislature. At lowest it might be entitled to negotiate the terms upon which the future connection between the countries would stand. In England the project was looked upon with commensurate alarm. Lord John Russell, in the House of Commons, predicted that O'Connell would succeed in evading the Convention Act, and that the powers and functions of Government would be wrested from the Lord Lieutenant, who would sit powerless in the Castle while the country was ruled from Conciliation Hall.[1] In truth, the project might mean much or little; like all political designs, the momentum depended on the vigour of the hand from which it was projected.

The class in Ireland who were in possession of the soil, of the offices of State, and the revenues of the Church, and who in the last resort had hitherto disposed of the army and the Executive, discerned in this proposal, if it were permitted to be worked out, a successful revolution. The *Warder* forewarned them that fixity of tenure was one of the original objects of the Repeal party, and that from the moment the Council of Three Hundred affirmed that principle there would be an end of rent in Ireland. Combination against rent was as easy as

[1] House of Commons, 28th July 1843.

combination against tithe. How could the Government or the landowners deal with it? Eject the malcontents; what then? They would go out and be supported by the Repeal Exchequer, while their farms lay untenanted; for who dare take them? The proprietor might farm for himself! But who would till the land for him? He might distrain. What! distrain the whole country? Well, choose some half dozen victims, seize their cattle and sell them! But who dare buy them in the presence of five hundred thousand Repealers? No, the Government must strike, and strike heavily and promptly, or all was lost! The *Evening Mail*, which spoke with more authority the sentiments of the Conservative gentry, warned Peel that if he could not assert successfully and speedily the supremacy of England against these dangerous projects, the gentry would be driven to negotiate with the Repealers.

"We can assure Sir Robert Peel," the *Mail* said, "that many honest and sober men begin to question whether such terms could not be made with the Repealers as would render a Parliament in College Green, with a House of Lords as it was before the Union, not only a glorious thing for Ireland, but very safe also for all her inhabitants. They argue from the proposed enlightenment of the times for the safety of their religion, if not for the toleration of their Church, and seeing the interest which the Roman Catholic landlords have in the permanence of their titles, they infer that their properties might be made safe enough."

The young men took up the project promptly, for such a Council would give the country the instrument which other nations struggling for freedom had found so effective—a Council commissioned to act on its behalf. They kindled and informed public opinion by memoirs of the representative bodies notable in Irish History, from the Confederation of Kilkenny in the time of Hampden and Cromwell to the Volunteer Conventions and Catholic Committees in the time of Pitt and Fox. The key of the project was to find candidates fit for such a trust, and all their energies were employed on this object. There is a vivid picture of the hopes and fears the proposal created in the private correspondence of the period; both hopes and fears turning on the question whether O'Connell had finally determined where he was going.

Davis was ready to act, but was less content with the prospect than some of his friends. Writing from the South, where he had gone to take counsel with some representative men, he said:—

"I am slow to write directly on the Three Hundred [in the *Nation*]. If the people were more educated I would rather postpone it for a year; but they would grow lawless and sceptical, so I fear this cannot be done. If O'Connell would pre-arrange, or allow others to pre-arrange, a 'decided' policy, I would look confidently to the Three Hundred as bringing matters to an issue in the best way. As it is, we must try and hit on some medium. We must not postpone it till Parliament meets, for the Three Hundred will not be a sufficiently free and brilliant thing to shine down St Stephen's and defy its coercion. Yet we must not push it too quickly, as the country, so far as I can see, is not braced up to any emergency. Ours is a tremendous responsibility, politically and personally, and we must see where we are going."

A little later, referring to the series of articles on popular councils which I had written in the *Nation*, he said, "Notice the Catholic Committee of '92;" Tone says it was "the noblest assembly he ever saw." At the same time he accepted an overture which I had communicated to him to represent a district in the North:—

"I have thought much of the place for which I should go into the Convention, and think after all that Down would be a proper place for me to represent. I cannot reconcile the two things—a Protestant constituency and a large available population. Tell them that as I am one not likely to shrink should the duty imposed on me be dangerous, so I should look for real confidence and manly backing whatever turn affairs take. I shall not work for praise or popularity. I want our cause to succeed, and shall in pursuit of success shrink from nothing but dishonour. I am not, nor shall I try to be, an orator. I would, if possible to my limited powers, be a politician. If your friends think such a man fit for their purposes I shall do their work as cautiously, firmly, and honestly as I can. I want them to understand me. In such a struggle as ours mistakes in character are terrible things. We can succeed if we earn success."[1]

John O'Connell also tendered Davis assistance to find a seat; he had evaded popularity, and even publicity, so sedulously that without some assistance there might have been a National Assembly from which the part of Mirabeau was omitted.

"As to your sitting in the Three Hundred, my father said he would not wish to have it without you. I should think we would easily get you a seat for a northern district, where men will be wanting, but not money. To have a non-Catholic would also be a good thing there."[2]

John Mitchel, who had become a Repealer early in the year, and who had since met the writers of the *Nation* on one or two occasions at their weekly suppers, was among the men invited to act in the North, and it is a significant fact that at that time he relied on O'Connell's guidance with implicit confidence.

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[1] Davis to Duffy, Sept. 13, 1843.
[2] John O'Connell to Davis, Dublin, Sept. 20, 1843.

"You do not, I am sure," he wrote from Banbridge,[1] "overrate the importance of that measure. It will be critical one way or the other, and if the members are wise men and bold (and the bolder the wiser) it will be critical the right way. If they meet with one single purpose, to do their work and submit implicitly to the guidance of a certain man that you wot of—if they do this, I am no profound statesman, my dear friend, nor political seer, but I have a strong conviction that this fair Ireland of ours will be a nation once more. May the Heavens grant it! As to my becoming a member—the project of this Council is a noble one, the plot a good plot, the service an honourable one. *Utinam, utinam.* Not to have been a member will hereafter be a source of regret; but, but—in short, I cannot afford to neglect my business. I have wife and children. To devote myself to this cause would simply ruin me, and I cannot sacrifice my family. I feel greatly indebted to you for your letter, and for the opinion of me which it implies, and besides I strongly incline to deal with you unreservedly, as a man may with his brother, and so you have my mind fully expressed about the Council of Three Hundred. There will be a difficulty in the North to get sufficient men, and I think in many cases the representatives must be Dublin people. But you and the other agitators will have to consider that point."

MacNevin also selected a constituency, and set to with characteristic ardour to prepare himself for the new duty. He was encouraged to hope that the Council might become a National Assembly in the most substantial sense by the sudden change of tone in the Conservative press. The *Warder*, returning to the subject, admitted that the "middle and humble classes of Protestants were everywhere beginning to canvass with more or less of serious dubitation the question of Repeal; to speculate with more or less intelligence and distinctness upon the subject of Federal Government; and in short, to treat some modification of Repeal as a question very open to favourable discussion." With a little delay and diplomacy MacNevin hoped they might be induced to make this the occasion of a treaty of peace and alliance.

"I have been reading," he wrote to me at this time, "everything about Belgium I could lay my hands upon. Though the union with Holland only continued for fifteen years, you have every evil resulting from the absence of nationality completely realised—the national flag dishonoured, the national sentiment outraged, the national name sunk, the national faith spurned. But in Belgium they had at least the compensation of prosperity; the union helped to make them rich. I have hunted up all sorts of Conventions and Confederations in modern history, the Back-lane Parliament[2] being no more overlooked than Dungannon. Where will I find a brief, clear account of the Confederation of Kilkenny?"

[1] Mitchel to Duffy, Sept. 8, 1843.

[2] The Back-lane Parliament was the nickname of the Catholic Convention of 1792, referred to above by Davis.

To which his correspondent replied—

"You will find the information you want in Leland; but remember Leland lies like the *Evening Packet.* This morning I had need to look up a fact touching the Restoration in Ireland, and I stumbled upon a parallel worth noting. In Charles II.'s time the Catholics were disarmed on the pretence of Titus Oates' Popish Plot (which of course he admits existed only in the invention of the informer), and he states the circumstance of the disarmament as a matter of course, scarcely requiring a comment; in the succeeding reign, when Monmouth's rebellion frightened James out of his wits, he disarmed certain suspected Protestants, and forthwith Parson Leland fills the welkin with an outcry against Popish tyranny. This contrast runs through his entire history; in his critical code there is as uniformly one law for the Catholic and another for the Protestant as in a certain other code with which you have made professional acquaintance.

"I met a coincidence in the said Leland yesterday which will tickle your midriff. In the reign of James I., when Catholic affairs passed from the hands of the swordsmen to the gownsmen, an eminent barrister, Sir John Everard, raised a contribution off the Catholic body of all degrees to support the agitation, and was able to collect this Catholic rent, notwithstanding the exertions and prohibitions of the Lord Lieutenant and Council. This prudent lawyer (who stood upon the broad basis of the Constitution, if you please) was accustomed to denounce O'Neill and the Geraldines with great bitterness for having striven a little earlier to accomplish similar ends by the sword. Who knows, indeed, but he denounced them as 'miscreants'! In a succeeding chapter Mr Leland has the indelicacy to record that another great Catholic leader, Chief Baron Rice (*temp.* Jacob. II.)—an ancestor of Spring Rice, I believe—declared that he would drive a coach and six through the Act of Settlement. Is there anything new, *mon ami*, under the sun, moon, or stars?"[1]

The enthusiasm of the young men received an awkward check. At one of the county meetings O'Connell represented that his purpose in proposing the Council was that after a little it might be recognised as the Irish Parliament by the Queen. "Three hundred gentlemen," he said, "from the several counties in Ireland would assemble in Dublin and would form the framework of an Irish Parliament; the mere form of attaching a bit of wax to a piece of parchment being all that was required to give them plenary power." This rhodomontade fell like a douche bath on the hopes of men who were in the habit of considering the relation of means to ends. More than once before the suggestion that the Irish Parliament would be revived by the exercise of the royal prerogative of Queen Victoria, in the same manner that James I. had created forty boroughs in one day, had irritated and alarmed them. They knew the exact value of the prerogative exercised by James since

[1] Duffy to MacNevin. "Miscreant" was the term O'Connell had applied to the United Irishmen.

it has been modified by a revolution in which his son lost his head, and by a second revolution in which his grandson lost his throne, and which transformed his successors into august agents for executing the will of the House of Commons; and they were tortured with the feeling that the national cause lost dignity and power when it was presented to the world in such a mask of sham constitutionalism.

But these subleties escaped the popular mind, and when O'Connell began to discuss in detail the number of members each district would be entitled to in a revived parliament, his plan was watched with the sort of interest that accompanies an important measure through committee in the House of Commons. He was determined not to be hurried. The districts were taken alphabetically. Athone and Athy were ordered to furnish certain returns before their proportion of members was fixed; the period when Wexford and Wicklow would be reached was beyond conjecture. At the same time, he complained privately that the *Nation* was interfering with his scheme;[1] and as our design was certainly not to create a Council in the belief that a bit of wax on a piece of parchment stamped with the great seal of England would some morning metamorphose it into an Irish Parliament, we resolved to pause and await the development of events.

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[1] "Touching the Council of Three Hundred, John O'Connell told me yesterday that his father was offended that we anticipated him in developing the project, and he advised me to go and see O'Connell on the question generally. I mean to do so in the morning, and if you come to town to-morrow you shall hear the result. Possibly he may only desire to have the first word, which is his right; he has, however, generally a horror of what you are accustomed to call 'subordinate sedition.'" — Duffy to MacNevin. Maurice O'Connell at this time, and always indeed, agreed with the young men more than any other member of his family. Davis, who was still in the country, wrote me, suggesting certain reasons why it might be desirable to have him, "and perhaps two or three more, including Maurice O'Connell (whom I saw yesterday), out of the assembly and out of the power of our foes under certain circumstances. Still I think it possible to secure both advantages (if my efforts in either way can be of use)."

O'Connell, however, had other people near him ready to suggest suspicion and jealousy. The *Pilot* a little earlier threw out a suggestion that there were conspirators against the cause abroad, and the people must beware. As it was unsafe to be too specific, the only direct attack in which the *Nation* was named appeared in the letters of the *Pilot's* American correspondent. For a time the young men maintained a contemptuous silence; at length I stated a fact which would have irreparably damaged any writer of tolerable character, and which wounded seriously even the pachydermatous editor of the *Pilot*. His American correspondent, Mr Thomas Mooney, had written to me that these libels were not his; were in fact interjected into his correspondence [in short, forged] in the *Pilot* office, and that he repudiated them.

CHAPTER IX.

A FOREIGN POLICY FOR IRELAND.

A FOREIGN policy for Ireland had sounded strange and alarming when it was first broached in the *Nation*, but it was now beginning to be a familiar thought. Throughout the United States, where Robert Emmet's dying speech had long been a classic, the leaders and ballads of the *Nation*, and the speeches of O'Connell were habitually reprinted, and liberal contributions to the Repeal Rent came occasionally from America and the Colonies. Early in the summer Mr Wilson Gray, a young barrister educated in Trinity College with Davis and Dillon, but practising at the American Bar, was the bearer of such a contribution; but he brought also assurances which were of more value and more wanted than money.[1] In the effort she was making to right herself, he declared, Ireland would have sympathy and aid from the Western Republic. American citizens remembered how much they owed to Ireland. Andrew Jackson, who next to Washington was best known and loved by the American people, declared that he had not one drop of blood in his veins that was not Irish. And of the candidates for the great office which Washington and Jackson had held, the men most likely to succeed were Calhoun, the son of Patrick Calhoun, an Irish emigrant, and James Buchanan, a man of the same stock.

When the report of Peel's minatory language reached America it became plain that these promises were not exaggerated. A series of transactions occurred which would have been possible perhaps in no other country but the United States, and under no form of government but one where international relations placed but light restraint upon the will of the people. In New York an aggregate meeting was held on a

[1] Mr Wilson Gray was brother of Dr Gray, and gave up his American career to join him in the management of the *Freeman's Journal*. He was in later times an eminent member of the Parliament of Victoria, Australia. He died in April 1875 a County Court Judge in New Zealand.

scale only known to America. The business occupied six consecutive days, and it was attended by enthusiastic multitudes to the end. Day after day the assembly was addressed by senators, judges, clergymen, and merchants, some of them remarkable for their fortunes even in that wealthy city. Governor Seward, afterwards destined to a memorable career as Secretary of State under President Lincoln; General Cass, already a man of mark; Horace Greeley, in later times candidate for the Presidency; and the Honourable John M'Keon, took the lead in these proceedings. The measures adopted had stamped on them the vigorous will and practical aims of men skilled in public affairs. To the declaration of the British Government, that they would suppress the national agitation by force, they answered by a declaration as unequivocal, that if England invaded Ireland she should do so "with the assured loss of Canada by American arms." And a merchant of Irish birth offered a princely donation towards fitting out fast-sailing ships of the type of the Baltimore clippers, of which English commerce could tell unpleasant tales; and he promised that a hundred of his class would do as much. It was resolved to solicit for Ireland the aid from other countries which she was not in a position to ask for herself; and an address was adopted calling on the French people, who had helped America in her need, to help Ireland also in her need. With what results this address was attended will be presently seen. The other measures were not less practical. As the law of seditious libel would render it highly hazardous to reproduce the American speeches and resolutions in the Irish Press,[1] two thousand copies of New York journals reporting the proceedings were sent through the post to selected persons in England and Ireland. At the same time, as a testimony of immediate sympathy, five thousand dollars were transmitted to the Repeal Association. Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore rivalled New York in plainness and promptitude of action. Judge James in transmitting the contribution of Boston assured the Irish leaders that it was their courage and firmness which had won the sympathy of America.

"If the American friends of Ireland, when they learned that the British Government were pouring troops into the country to enforce the threat of suppressing Repeal at the hazard of a civil war, had learned at the same time that the people had proved themselves unfit to meet this contingency, he would not undertake to say what would have been the effect of such intelligence. But the undaunted spirit, the immovable firmness, which they had exhibited, proved them worthy of the admiration and support of the citizens of the United States."

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[1] They were copied by the *Nation* and probably other journals.

Mr Stokes, on the part of the Philadelphia Repealers, transmitted two thousand dollars, a sum, he remarked, which, though it exceeded the entire revenue of the Repeal Association in one of its earlier years, had been collected in a single week in a single American city in consequence of the language employed by the Minister of England. "We say no more"—it was with these significant words he concluded—"we say no more, for we feel that in this important crisis actions are more valuable than words. While we say but little we are prepared to do much. We are ready to render to Ireland any assistance, consistent with our duty as American citizens, which any exigency in Ireland may at any time require."

While the New York Repealers addressed the people of France, the Philadelphia Repealers invited the President of the United States to take personal part in their proceedings. John Tyler, who then filled that eminent and powerful magistracy, which confers more direct personal authority than any constitutional sovereign in Europe enjoys, excused himself from attending a public meeting, but made a declaration which created a profound impression on both sides of the Atlantic. "I am the decided friend," he said, "of the repeal of the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland. I ardently and anxiously hope that it may take place, and I have the utmost confidence that Ireland will have her own Parliament in her own capital in a very short time. On this great question I am no halfway man." The President's eldest son, Robert Tyler, took a constant share and vigilant interest in the subsequent Irish-American proceedings.

Sympathy like this had enabled the Seven United Provinces to resist the tyranny of Charles V., and had enabled the thirteen Confederated Colonies to resist the tyranny of George III. It cannot be doubted from the language employed that these American sympathisers anticipated an armed resistance in Ireland to any armed intervention of the English Government to suppress public meetings. They accepted O'Connell's promises of resistance as the simple echo of his intentions. In proffering assistance, were they holding out idle hopes? It may have become a party device in later times to court the Irish vote with promises never intended to be fulfilled, but in 1843 such promises were made for the first time, made when there was no reason to suppose that the fulfilment would not be speedily demanded, and their good faith was not doubted, nor was there any just cause to doubt it. Here is significant evidence of it five years later, when delay and discouragement had cooled many and alienated some of the American sympathisers.

Horace Greeley and John M'Keon acted on a Directory formed in New York for sending officers and arms to Ireland; two of the committee-men were arrested on their way to the seat of the insurrection, and sent to Newgate Prison in Dublin; and there came other Americans and Irishmen from America on the same mission who escaped detection.

In the British Colonies of North America the Irish were in a fever of anxiety. Liberal subscriptions and promises of help came from Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Canada. Sir Charles Metcalfe, then Governor of Canada, warned the Imperial Government that any aggression upon Ireland would be fatal to the tranquillity, if not the security, of the North American provinces.[1] And there were not wanting, even then, some who whispered that a closer alliance with the West was the one thing needful to raise Ireland to her rightful place; that nature had bestowed upon her a position on the globe between the Old World and the New which, rightly used by a free people in amity with America, would be a security for empire and prosperity equal to the Bosphorus or the Thames.

The sympathy demanded of France was not long delayed, and in accordance with the character of that nation it was outspoken and direct. On the receipt of the American address a public dinner was held in Paris, ostensibly to celebrate the taking of the Bastille, but in effect to express sympathy with the Irish movement. There was a hundred and fifty persons present, the more conspicuous being deputies of the Left, editors of the Radical Press, and officers of the National Guard. The chair was taken by Arago, and among the speakers were Carnot, son of the organiser of victory; Marrast, Garnier Pagès, and Ledru Rollin—five men who, before five years had elapsed, were destined to be members of a Government which not only ruled France, but for a time swayed opinion throughout Europe. Ledru Rollin employed language as plain and precise as any which had been used in America. "Let England understand that, if she attempt to overcome legitimate rights by violent and coercive measures, France is ready to lend an oppressed people, in their decisive struggle, experienced heads, resolute hearts, and sturdy arms. Let her remember that the same causes led to the independence of the New World, and that her children, simple citizens, courageous volunteers, won at the sword's point that liberty which they maintain, and which, I trust, they will maintain to the world's end." A subscription was made towards the

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[1] Kay's "Life of Lord Metcalfe," vol. ii. p. 503.

Repeal Funds, and M. Rollin was requested to present it in person to the Association in Dublin. The *National*, the organ of the party which took the lead in these transactions, commenting on a rumour reported to the *Times* from Dublin, that French officers were drilling the peasantry in some districts in Ireland, declared that "the statement was rather premature than false."

There was no *entente cordiale* in those days between England and France. Louis Napoleon had not been received in London like a descending deity, or a foreign war undertaken as the price of his amity. On the contrary, a conflict between the two nations seemed a constant possibility. It was confidently stated that only three years earlier M. Thiers had had a conference with General Corbet, a distinguished Irish soldier, on the feasibility of a military expedition to Ireland. And it is certain that before twelve months from the Bastille dinner a son of Louis Philippe published a pamphlet on the new navy of France in which such an expedition was foreshadowed.[1]

When the American news arrived O'Connell exulted in it, and bade the Government note that, in case of aggression, Ireland would not want powerful allies. But the reception of a French delegate coming with specific offers of military assistance would amount to High Treason, and he was not disposed to allow his foreign friends to draw him into that peril. At the next meeting of the Association he repudiated any tender of armed support. He disclaimed the idea that the Irish people would violate their allegiance or resort to physical force except in the

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[1] In 1840 we frequently consulted about the way we could be best employed to serve Ireland in the event of a war between France and England, which was then on the point of being declared. I remember one day, after an audience he (General Corbet) had had with the Minister of War on the situation of Ireland, he told me that the Minister, General Schneider, was very desirous to have a conversation with me respecting the reliance which could be placed on the then leader of the Irish when a French army should land in Ireland.—"Memoirs of Colonel Miles Byrne."

General Corbet was an Irish officer who won rank and distinction in the French army. In 1797 he was a student in Trinity College, Dublin, and was expelled on suspicion of sympathy with the United Irish movement. He fled to France, and was long engaged in the design to obtain an expedition from the Republic to Ireland. When that hope failed he became a captain in the Irish Legion organised by Napoleon, and fought with distinction throughout his wars. He was on the staff of Masséna, and afterwards of Marmont, and rose to the rank of colonel under the Empire. This was the soldier consulted in reference to a design upon Ireland three years before the Irish movement of which Ledru Rollin was the spokesman.

The Prince de Joinville's pamphlet, which appeared in 1844, was treated as a European event by the Continental Press. It was plainly intended to propitiate the war party, then furious in their desire for war with England. The feasibility of an invasion of Ireland was a frequent text of the journalists, and her wrongs were described in language of remarkable vigour.

last extremity—to defend themselves when attacked. If they were attacked they would take the support of everybody who would aid them in protecting themselves from violence. But no such support would be required; and while they were gratified at the sympathy shown them, they were determined that the sympathy should never exceed the just bounds of their allegiance.[1] To this speech Ledru Rollin replied on behalf of his friends in an elaborate letter, and a day was appointed to take this document into consideration. The French democracy, M. Rollin declared, had not forgotten the Irish Legion which fought by the side of their ancestors, nor were they ignorant that the politics of the present day drew the two nations together.

Ireland's claims were for liberty of worship, the reform of land laws based on spoliation, and the right to govern herself; and her enemy was the enemy of equality and liberty all over the world—the English aristocracy. It was for this reason the democracy of France responded so promptly to the voice of their American brethren. They offered a testimony of profound sympathy with a peaceable and legal struggle, but in case the Tory Government should violate the sanctuary of the law, they believed that France would offer other aid against augmented danger.

O'Connell in his rejoinder reiterated his statement that the Repealers sought no foreign alliance, but reiterated also his assurance that if aggression commenced, help would become necessary and welcome.

Looking for the Repeal as they did by legal and constitutional means, and no other, the contingent proffer of future support was a topic he did not enter into further than this, that if the British Government were to use force against them, to trample on their constitutional rights, setting the law at defiance, and thus throw them on their own defence, they would be glad in such an event to get allies and supporters everywhere.[2]

The vehement applause of the audience gave this sentiment more significance than was prudent, and in the conclusion of his speech the cautious orator laboured to mitigate the effect.

He recognised the sympathy offered as bestowed upon men struggling within the limits of local law and constitutional principle for the rights of their native land, and desiring to employ no means that were not peaceable. On these grounds he regarded the proposed visit to Ireland in a public capacity as premature; at a more suitable period he would feel honoured in being permitted to exercise the offices of hospitality towards Monsieur Rollin. The people of Ireland, like those who addressed them, were favourable to democratic liberty, but liberty mitigated and secured by the stability of a limited monarchy, and resting on the basis of veneration for the religious sentiment and sincerity in religious observances.

Offers like these from America and France, whether rejected or

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[1] *Nation*, July 22, 1843.

[2] *Nation*, August 5, 1843.

accepted for a future contingency, served to confirm the people in the belief that sooner or later the Government would interrupt the movement, and resistance would become necessary. The probability of success, which moralists require as a justification for the use of force, seemed to them to be reached when the will of the nation was fortified by the good wishes and proffered aid of other nations. Ireland, in the fine image of Maturin, was like one of Newton's stars, the light of which had only now reached the world, but it was beginning to shine visibly, and was welcomed into the system of nations with pæans of sympathy. To invoke and create this precious sentiment, and waste it wantonly in the end, was a public crime and a national sin.

Week by week the Repealers strengthened their organisation, and the Government completed their preparations. Barracks were fortified, forts were victualled, and points of strategic importance occupied. The two forces stood face to face in an attitude of watchfulness, and it seemed impossible that they could disengage themselves without a conflict. But between them there stood an important section of the nation who sided with neither; who feared indeed that an Irish Parliament might be too democratic or too Catholic, but feared still more the disasters and hazards of civil war. The Irish Whigs embraced a few peers of great possessions, a large body of country gentlemen, several of whom were in Parliament, and a considerable section of the learned professions; and were led by men long trained in the management of public affairs. To stand silent in such a crisis was not consistent with their pretensions, and still less consistent with their party interests, for the complete victory of either of the belligerents would involve the total eclipse of Whiggery in Ireland. But there were higher motives at work. Many of them had a keen and genuine desire to amend all admitted wrongs; and a few who still clung to their party from habit were intensely national in sympathy and sentiment. The long contest over the Arms Bill had taught them that O'Connell was not wrong when he declared that Parliament was deaf and obdurate to their wishes, and Peel's declaration that no consension of Irish opinion would influence his conduct on the Repeal question was deeply resented.

It was agreed among the Irish members of this section to bring before the House of Commons the case of Ireland as it presented itself to men who were not Repealers, and to invite Parliament in the interest of justice, and still more in the interest of the Union, to redress all proved wrongs. Mr Smith O'Brien, who by station and character was well fitted for the duty, undertook to open the case. The English

Whigs, who had no objection to increase Peel's difficulties, smiled approval, and notice was given that on the 4th July Mr O'Brien would move the House into Committee "for the purpose of taking into consideration the causes of the discontent prevailing in Ireland with a view to the redress of grievances and to the establishment of just and impartial government."

One of the chief functions of Parliament is to secure just and impartial government, and to many devoted Unionists it seemed certain that the House of Commons would put itself in the right by giving Ireland the assurance of equal laws and equal treatment with England, in all cases compatible with the maintenance of the Union. In past difficulties between the two countries the House of Commons had often been dominated by a stubborn and contemptuous prejudice, which refused so much as to listen to the truth; but this spirit was supposed to belong to the past, not to the era of a wary Minister, who understood so well the imperative necessity of appearing to be in the right.

Contemporary English authorities admit the fairness and moderation of O'Brien's speech. He did not treat the question as a partisan of the Opposition, but simply as an Irish gentleman who had no higher desire than to live a tranquil life in his native country, surrounded by a contented people in the full enjoyment of British liberty. At present such a life, he contended, was impossible, because discontent was nearly universal. In any county throughout three provinces, fifty thousand men could be called together at an appointed spot at forty-eight hours' notice. The bulk of Protestants still held aloof, but no one could tell how soon they would make common cause with their countrymen. The aristocracy and the landed proprietors for the most part were neutral or hostile, but he predicted they could not continue to remain as units divested of influence and authority in the midst of the nation.

Starting from this modest exordium, he proceeded to inquire what were the occult causes of the universal discontent. Leaping over historical wrongs, he invited Parliament to consider how the case stood at that hour.

Ireland was made poor and was kept poor by exceptional treatment. She was overtaxed in direct violation of the conditions of the Union. She was drained of many of the sources of prosperity that contributed to the wealth of England. The public establishments which she formerly possessed had been gradually withdrawn. If this were done for the purposes of economy and uniformity of administration, as was alleged, no attempt was made to compensate Ireland by giving her a proportionate share of the national

expenditure. The harbours of Ireland were confessedly better than those of England, yet there did not exist in Ireland a single naval dockyard. Of the navy estimates for the current year, amounting to six millions and a half, not more than ten thousand pounds would be spent on Ireland. A recent Parliamentary return[1] disclosed the pregnant fact that between '33 and '42 the British Exchequer remitted to the Irish Exchequer the sum of eighty thousand pounds, and the Irish Exchequer remitted to the British the sum of six millions three hundred and fifty-five thousand pounds, leaving an average of seven hundred thousand pounds a year as a tribute paid to England. Repealers contended that the taxes raised in Ireland, if disposed of by a Local Parliament, would be spent at home by Irishmen for the benefit of Ireland; was it wise to allow the Irish people to feel that in this respect their condition was worse under the Union than it would be if the Irish Parliament were restored?

Another source of discontent was the maintenance of Protestant ascendancy in practice when it had been abolished in law. In a country where four-fifths of the population were Catholics, all the offices of Government were held by Protestants. The Lord Lieutenant was a Protestant, so were the Lord Chancellor, the Chief Secretary, and the Under Secretary, the Attorney-General, and the Solicitor-General. The great offices of Chief Justice and Master of the Rolls, as well as the offices of Baron of the Exchequer and Justice of the Common Pleas, had fallen vacant quite recently, and they were all bestowed upon Protestants, whose chief claim to promotion appeared to be hostility to the Catholic people. Let Englishmen make the case their own and consider how they would relish it.

He passed from the work of the Executive to the work of Parliament itself. He described in detail the stinted and exceptional system set up under the pretence of municipal reform; but the Poor-law was even a more significant case.

A Royal Commission on the question, after three years' inquiry, framed a report embodying the views held by men of the highest intelligence in Ireland. But their proposals were cast aside, and Mr Nichol, a complete stranger, was entrusted with the task of framing the Poor Law now in operation.

In administering the act, as well as in framing it, it seemed to have been recognised as a principle that entire ignorance of the country was the best recommendation. Mr Nichol, as Chief Commissioner, possessed almost absolute power; and there were six Englishmen, Assistant Commissioners, under him, and only four Irishmen. The Architect was an Englishman, the Chief Clerk and all the officers in his branch were Englishmen; Irishmen were only employed where the duty and salary were lowest. Was it surprising that the people of Ireland, when they found their most important local affairs so contemptuously and clumsily treated, should have concluded that the British Parliament was incapable of legislating for them?

In all free States the distribution of patronage forms an important

[1] Par. Pap. No 305, Session of 1842.

force in the machinery of government. In Belgium and Canada discontent, ending in armed insurrection, had been excited by the exclusion of the native population from the offices of authority. But in Ireland, in every department of local or general administration, Irishmen were studiously excluded from direction or control.

The Lord Lieutenant was an Englishman, the Chief Secretary was an Englishman, the Lord Chancellor was an Englishman, the Archbishop of Dublin was an Englishman; the Irish Exchequer, the General Post-Office, the Public Works Department, were all directed by Englishmen. The Irish Constabulary and the Irish Excise were under the control of Scotchmen, and the officers employed in the collection of Customs were English and Scotch in the proportion of thirty-five to one.

It might be contended that this was only part of a system of unbarring the gates of patronage impartially to all subjects of the Queen in all parts of the Empire. How did the facts bear out this theory? There were thirteen Cabinet Ministers, of whom nine were Englishmen, three Scotchmen, and one an Irishman, if the Duke of Wellington could be fairly considered a representative of Irish interests. Of the Lords of the Treasury, four were Englishmen, one a Scotchman, and one an Irishman. Of the Clerks of the Treasury, a hundred and twelve were British and one Irish. Of the officers of the Royal Household, there were two hundred and twenty-five British and four Irish. Of Ministers to Foreign Courts, a hundred and thirty-one were British and four Irish. And the same system ran through all the public departments. He estimated the proportion to be four hundred and ninety Englishmen to ten Irishmen.

These were some of the causes of Irish discontent. The Established Church and the Land Law were still more potential causes. A large part of the nation was persuaded that it was hopeless to seek redress from the British Parliament; and the demand for Repeal was not the voice of treason but the language of despair. He was persuaded that not one man in a thousand among the Repealers desired either separation from England or a change of Sovereign.

These were weighty facts which no just and discreet legislature would disregard, but what followed was of more political significance. Speaking on behalf of Irish gentlemen, he warned the Minister that they had heard with wrath and indignation his menace that he would hazard a civil war rather than concede a Repeal of the Union even to the unanimous demand of the Irish nation. A declaration so offensive to the national pride compelled them to tell him that if the people of Ireland were unanimous in desiring the restoration of their Parliament, they could obtain it without firing a shot. Among numberless methods by which a nation could effect its purpose, take one. Within the current year England had prostrated her national dignity and deranged her finances in the hopes of obtaining from the

Kingdom of Portugal a treaty of commerce by which she would sell woollen goods to the value of £100,000 a year; a non-intercourse resolution adopted by the Irish people would shut up a market worth eight or ten millions annually.

For himself—so this weighty and impressive statement concluded—he had long cherished the hope and desire of a perfect incorporation with England, but after twelve years' experience of the House of Commons, he was compelled to admit that it possessed little knowledge of Irish wants, and less disposition to provide for them. Session after session measures which would be hailed with enthusiasm by an Irish Parliament, and which were supported by a large majority of the Irish members, were contemptuously rejected. Session after session, and in this very session, measures were forced upon a reluctant nation by English majorities against the remonstrances of its own representatives. Whenever Ireland asked for the same laws that existed in England, she was told that the circumstances of the two countries were wholly different, and required different treatment; whenever she asked any deviation from the English system, the established laws and customs of Great Britain were pleaded as a sufficient answer. With this experience it was not surprising that he should often doubt whether the abstract opinion he had formed in favour of a perfect Union, never realised, was consistent with his duty to the country possessing the first claims on his devotion. What was it to him that the maintenance of the Union was essential to the strength and security of the Empire, if it did not bring welfare and happiness to his native land? He hoped Parliament would that night give to those who still clung to the legislative connection, if it proved to be compatible with the interests of Ireland, something which they might present to their fellow-countrymen as a pledge of a disposition to repair the wrongs which it had inflicted, and to consolidate the connection by the bonds of equal laws, common rights, and international justice.

The motion was debated for five nights. The Whigs expressed their amazement that Peel had not recourse to conciliation. Sir Charles Wood assured him that it was hopeless to govern Ireland through a Protestant garrison. Lord John Russell recommended that the Catholic bishops and clergy should be put on a footing of perfect equality with the Protestant bishops and clergy, little foreseeing the Ecclesiastical Titles Act he was destined to pass, which made it penal for a Catholic bishop to bear the title of his diocese. In the difficulties which might accrue with foreign nations, he solemnly warned the

Government to beware of the consequences of their injustice to Ireland. In the mouth of a party leader this language was easy of interpretation; if the Whigs came in, all difficulties would speedily disappear; otherwise, manifestly not. Young England was then in the beginning of its brief career, and Mr Smythe and Lord John Manners attacked the policy of the Government and expressed a generous sympathy with Ireland. But on a division the motion was lost by a large majority.[1]

Parliament declined to consider the redress of grievances or the establishment of a just and impartial system of government. The terms of the motion may have justified the Administration in regarding it as one which they were bound to resist, but an amendment would have enabled them to promise the redress of grievances without admitting that the existing government was partial and unjust. To many moderate men it seemed plain that a Parliament which could hear complaints so serious and specific and refuse enquiry, forfeited its moral authority—that authority which springs from the due performance of great duties. If it would not allow Ireland fair play in the employment of her national resources, and allot her a just proportion of the public burthens, and a legitimate share of the public employments, how could it any longer deny that it became a right and a duty to break away from such an iniquitous partnership? Had the Irish movement resulted in another Bunker's Hill or Lexington, the debate and division of July '43 would have been remembered in history as a signal instance of human folly. As it was, its most notable result was to win one convert little suspected at the moment. The facts disclosed sank deep into the sensitive conscience and ruminating mind of the Prime Minister.

The House of Commons had been appealed to in vain, but the baffled Irish members resolved to carry their appeal a step further. Thirty of them agreed to an address to the British people, detailing wrongs under which Ireland laboured, capable of easy redress without trenching on the constitution of the empire. The wrongs were those specified in O'Brien's speech. Among the thirty members were such representative Whigs of hereditary possessions or ancient

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[1] 243 to 164 votes. Mr John Wilson Croker in the *Quarterly Review* reproached Young England for supporting a measure "the most offensive to Old England which had been made for many years," and warned them that the notice their conduct received would not serve them with any English party or constituency. "A few stray and unexpected shots, fired in the rear of an army, attract more notice than a cannonade in front; but it is an evanescent surprise soon forgotten, or remembered only to the disadvantage of those whose indiscretion created it."

lineage as Villiers Stuart of Waterford, Carew of Wexford, Tuite of Westmeath, Ross of Rosstrevor, Archbold of Kildare, Jephson of Mallow, Wyse, afterwards British Minister in Greece, and Redington, afterwards Under Secretary for Ireland. The address was probably as little heeded as the appeals and remonstrances of Hancock and Franklin to the British nation two generations earlier; it was scarcely published in the Government organs, and found no echo even in the Whig Press; but it moved profoundly the whole body of Liberal Irish representatives, who had no longer anything to propose as a substitute for the dazzling hope of legislative independence. The ideal of these gentlemen, it must be confessed, was not Utopian or chimerical. It was simply an Ireland which should not be bullied or cheated; an Ireland admitted to the profits and honours of the partnership forced upon her. What they asked was fair play in its most rudimentary form, but the English people passed on in scornful silence, taking no heed of the crop of calamities they left behind. It is little to them that this refusal, in the end, wrecked the life of a generous Irish gentleman; but is it little that it fostered the rancour which makes disasters to England a cause of rejoicing in Ireland; which in recent times made the confusion and possible destruction of England's greatest work—Parliamentary institutions—sport to the Irish people, and which would make them blind allies of any enemy who threatened the existence of the empire? The effect on the Parliamentary party was notable. Sir William Somerville, afterwards Chief Secretary, in declining an invitation to a Repeal banquet, remarked that he "had not yet been able to persuade himself to join the movement." And in Westmeath, when the Grand Jury were invited to petition against Repeal, Sir Montagu Chapman declined to assent at a time when Parliament had just refused to afford any prospect of the redress of grievances; and a dozen members of the jury, among whom were Sir Percy Nugent and Sir Richard Nagle, joined him in a protest embodying this objection.

Though these complaints were the complaints of Unionists, that the system which they supported was not more fairly administered, their discussion and their reception by Parliament greatly fortified the position of Repealers. If the two countries were co-ordinate parts of the same State, living under an identical law, such inequalities were plainly indefensible, and their removal ought to have been recognised as a work of urgency. But if they were not co-ordinate, if one of the countries was a subject realm, compelled to defer to the wishes of the

other, without hope of relief, mankind have long ago agreed that any method of escape from such bondage is legitimate and honourable.

Critics were not wanting who suggested that these unredressed grievances were precisely the wrongs which Europe had, quite recently, considered a sufficient justification for revolt. Belgium in her union with Holland saw the principal offices in the kingdom filled by Dutchmen, and the principal public institutions transferred to Holland. She was allowed only an inadequate share of members in the common Parliament, which always sat in Holland, and an inadequate share of the public employments paid out of the common revenue of the united Kingdom. Though she had not to endure the insufferable outrage of subsidising a Church which she refused to accept, the education of the Catholic people was tampered with by Protestant officials; and though the land was not distributed into great estates enjoyed by Dutchmen, the native population had to endure an unfair proportion of the public taxes. For these reasons she had revolted a dozen years before; and France and England helped her to secure and establish her independence.

The British Parliament in 1834 had accompanied their declaration in support of the Union by a pledge to remove all just causes of complaint. To maintain the Union but remove all just causes of complaint is an intelligible policy; in the mouth of an Imperial Minister it is at any rate a consistent and logical answer to the remonstrance of Ireland. If that promise had been kept it is probable the name of O'Connell would never have been heard of in connection with a renewed Repeal agitation. But the promise had no sooner answered its purpose than it was forgotten. The policy pursued was to maintain the Union and *not* remove just causes of complaint. If thoughtful and considerate Englishmen regard this as fair dealing and honest treatment, they may well wonder at the perversity of Irish discontent; if they do not, such wonder is insensate; for discontent flows from injustice as surely as heat from fire, and modern philosophers—who wash their hands ostentatiously of the blood and crimes of the past, but demand, What special wrong does Ireland suffer at present?—are invited to take up the catalogue of wrongs disclosed in this debate and inquire how many of them have since been redressed.

In such a crisis a compromise is sure to be suggested, and moderate men began to cast about for some system which might be acceptable to the landed gentry and the Ulster manufacturers, and yet perhaps

content the remainder of the nation. Some of them came to the conclusion that an Irish Legislature for purely Irish purposes, as a sort of chapel of ease to the Imperial Parliament, ought to be demanded. Mr Sharman Crawford, on behalf of himself and others unnamed, but understood to include members of both Houses, announced that he desired the establishment of a Federal Union between England and Ireland. He wished to see a "local body for the purpose of local legislation, combined with an Imperial representation for Imperial purposes"; and he considered that the fundamental principle of the renewed Union ought to be that "no Act of the Imperial Parliament having a separate action as regards Ireland should be a law in Ireland unless passed or confirmed by her own legislative body." It is a fact worthy to be pondered on that Davis was favourable to this experiment. He desired and would have fought for independence, but he was so little of what in later times has been called "an irreconcilable," that such an alternative was not the first, but the last, resource he contemplated. He desired to unite and elevate the whole nation, and he would have accepted Federation as the scheme most likely to accustom and reconcile Protestants to self-government, and as a sure step towards legislative independence in the end. But some of his comrades, though they cordially welcomed the movement as an auxiliary, were opposed to any formal sanction being given to the principle, either in the Association or in the national Press. The moment Repealers showed any uncertainty in their main purpose, the will of the people, they feared, would be unnerved, for no one had forgotten how the former Repeal movement ended; and the will of the people was the weapon by which we expected to accomplish our purpose. O'Connell invited Mr Crawford to join the Association as a Federalist, as Mr O'Hagan and the Bishop of Killala had already done; but he coldly excused himself. In truth, any joint action between Crawford and O'Connell was hopeless, because there was no mutual confidence. Each of them judged the other too harshly; and probably the cold, just, narrow Puritan, and the large, genial, exuberant orator were incapable of understanding each other. Bnt Mr Crawford was prepared to co-operate with those whose aims were identical with his own, and Mr Ross, who represented the capital of Ulster, and Colonel Caulfield, heir-presumptive of the Earl of Charlemont and son of the Earl who led the Volunteers of '82, gave their sanction to the scheme. Mr Ross in the late debate anticipated a memorable utterance in our own times, by declaring in the language of Charles James

Fox that "the best way to govern Ireland was to let her have her own way," and he was now prepared to give practical effect to this principle.[1] Those who knew the proud and resolute character of Smith O'Brien predicted that, having failed with the English Parliament and the English people, he would be speedily found in one national movement or the other. There was no longer any choice indeed, but submission to the Minister or identification with the discontent of the people. Mr Robertson, of Clara, an influential member of the Society of Friends, expressed a common opinion when he declared that he became a Repealer because he now despaired of justice from Parliament.

In such a state of the public mind no class can stand still. It soon became known that a number of Liberal peers had agreed to recommend large concessions, and were understood to recommend them with the implied warning that large concessions were probably the sole alternative to the popular demand. The Duke of Leinster, who stood at the head of the Irish nobility, the Marquis of Anglesey, who had been twice Lord Lieutenant, the Earls of Meath, Arran, and Leitrim, and Lords Gosford and Milltown, were named in connection with this project.

These sectional demonstrations served to intensify the national movement; they put it beyond doubt that every class in the island was more or less discontented, except indeed the clergy of the Established Church and the Tory gentry, both of whom were in the enjoyment of monopolies which popular agitation or Parliamentary inquiry into the state of the nation would seriously endanger.

On the other side there were also musters and consultations. The Irish peers and Commons of the Tory party met at the house of Lord Wicklow, and agreed to a series of resolutions declaring that the Repeal meetings were dangerous to the public peace, suspended the ordinary occupations of the population, and kept up a painful and

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[1] Mr Fox's speech at the Whig Club during the debates on the Union was cited at this time. It may still be consulted with advantage by his admirers. "The whole scheme (the Union) went upon that false and abominable presumption that we could legislate better for the Irish than they could do for themselves—a principle founded upon the most arrogant despotism and tyranny. . . . There was no maxim more true in philosophy or in politics than the great moral doctrine, 'Do as you would be done by.' What Englishman would submit to see his destiny regulated and his affairs conducted by persons chosen for Belfast or Limerick? . . . We ought not to presume to legislate for a nation, in whose feelings and affections, wants and interests, opinions and prejudices, we have no sympathy. It can only be attempted on the principle of the most arrogant despotism."

perilous excitement. But the remedy that seemed good to these distinguished persons was not concession but repression.

Men of considerable wealth and social position joined the Association from week to week; and cynical observers noted that the prudent class who run to a prosperous cause with as sure an instinct as they run away from a losing one were beginning to appear. Among the new recruits was a gentleman who afterwards for a brief time occupied a large share of public attention—Mr John Augustus O'Neill, of Bunowen Castle. Mr O'Neill had inherited a liberal fortune, now dilapidated, and had run a showy career, now in eclipse. He had been an officer in a fashionable regiment, and had sat for a time in the House of Commons as Tory member for Hull. He brought to the national cause an indefatigable industry in composing pamphlets and set speeches, and as his sense of self-importance was very vigilant in asserting and vindicating itself, he became in the end a sore trial to O'Connell's patience.[1]

The session of Parliament closed with a Queen's Speech, which called upon persons having influence and authority to discourage to the utmost of their power the pernicious agitation existing in Ireland, and which promised on behalf of the Sovereign to maintain inviolable the legislative union. But men asked each other, how was it to be done?—Hitherto every movement against the Repealers had only served to strengthen and consolidate them. The dismissal of the magistrates filled Conciliation Hall with recruits of character and ability; the Arms Bill, though it finally became law, alienated a large section of the Irish members; and the refusal to consider the redress of grievances in the House of Commons precipitated the formation of a Federal party among Protestant gentlemen and of a party of concession

[1] Mr O'Neill was the subject of a good story, which is likely to outlive his essays and orations. His father, who had been an official in Ireland, changed his name from MacGeoghegan to O'Neill, on the ground that these families came from a common Milesian ancestor, and their descendants were entitled to assume either name at pleasure. While John Augustus was in the army a conversation arose at mess table on the difficulty of pronouncing family names, and Marjoribanks and Cholmondely were cited as instances. [Some Irish readers will perhaps need to be told that these names are pronounced "Marchbanks" and "Chumley."] An Irish officer declared that these difficulties were nothing compared to those which existed with family names in Ireland, and he tried the company with O'Shaughnessy and Mac-gillicuddy, which, however, were not found to be absolutely impracticable. "I'll give you another," he cried, "which I defy you to master; how would you pronounce Macgeoghegan?" Various attempts, more or less successful, were made; but "Mac-agin," "Mick-o-gan," and even the authentic "Mac-geo-gan" were rejected by the Irish officer. "Oh, no," he said; "we pronounce that name O'Neill in Ireland."

among the hereditary leaders of the Whigs. Peel had been repulsed on his first two attacks; another defeat would render his position as a British Minister untenable.

One of Davis's friends, a law student, who had been watching the proceedings of Parliament with close interest, wrote from London to warn him that this confidence was insensate; when the Houses were up a fierce stroke would inevitably be struck against the national movement.[1]

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[1] Davis's Papers. The writer was Mr Synan, afterwards one of the members for Limerick.

CHAPTER X.

MUSTER OF THE NATION AT TARA AND MULLAGHMAST.

NONE of these transactions was permitted to interrupt the work of organising the country. Monster meetings were held weekly, and even twice a week. And new meetings were projected faster than O'Connell could attend, though he worked with an energy prodigious in one who neared the term assigned to the life of man. At Tara, in Meath, the site of the Royal Palace of Temora, where the Ardrigh and sub-kings of Ireland met in council; at Clontibret, in Ulster, where the Irish had been successful in a memorable battle against the army of the Commonwealth; at Mullaghmast, where, according to a somewhat doubtful tradition, four hundred Irish chiefs were invited to a feast in the reign of Elizabeth and foully murdered, meetings were held, and attended by still increasing numbers.

Some details of the proceedings at Tara, which I wrote hastily in a note-book shortly after the event, may aid the generation since born to picture to themselves a Repeal meeting in 1843:—

At nine o'clock in the morning a small train of private carriages, containing O'Connell and a dozen friends, set out from Merrion Square. They passed through some of the chief thoroughfares of Dublin, and the windows and pavements were already occupied by eager spectators. Carriages containing members of the Corporation in their robes of office, and other notable citizens, fell in silently at various points, and in the suburbs a long line of vehicles, chiefly the famous Dublin jaunting cars crowded with citizens, was waiting to join them, and the cortège became a procession. The route lay through a succession of hamlets, villages, and towns, and in every hamlet, village, or town the entire population was afoot in their holiday dress, and the houses were decorated with banners or evergreens. The local muster, headed by its local band, immediately took its place in the procession, on horseback or in vehicles. Wagons, capacious "floats" brought from the city, and the country carts used in agriculture, were all employed, and were all found barely sufficient to accommodate the people. It was afterwards ascertained that toll was paid at Cabra, Phibsborough, and Blanchardstown on thirteen hundred vehicles. The horsemen could not be strictly computed, but it was estimated that the number in attendance on O'Connell did not fall short of ten thousand.

Before the procession had arrived within a dozen miles of the historic hill large crowds were discovered who had come from distant places during the

night, and bivouacked in the green pastures of Meath, under a genial August sky. A little later the Repealers of Kells, Trim, and Navan, the chief towns of Meath, joined the procession. Each town was preceded by its band in the national uniform of green and white, and by banners with suitable inscriptions. They were mustered by mounted marshals, distinguished by badges, horsemen four deep, footmen six deep, and the men of each parish marched, as O'Connell afterwards declared, "as if they were in battalions." Three miles from the hill the vehicles had to be abandoned; from the immensity of the attendance there was space only for footmen. The abandoned vehicles were drawn up in line to wait the return of their occupants, and it is one of the wonders of this wonderful era that they were found at the day's close without appreciable loss or injury. Around the base of the hill the bands and banners were mustered. The bands amounted to forty, an equipment sufficient for an army; the banners were past counting.

The procession, however, was but as a river discharging itself into an ocean. The whole district was covered with men. The population within a day's march began to arrive on foot shortly after daybreak, and continued to arrive, on all sides and by every available approach, till noon. It was impossible from any one point to see the entire meeting; the hill rose almost perpendicularly out of the level plain, and hill and plain were covered with a multitude, "countless as the bearded grain." The number is supposed to have reached between five hundred thousand and seven hundred and fifty thousand persons. It was ordinarily spoken of as a million, and was certainly a muster of men such as had never before assembled in one place in Ireland, in peace or war. It was a subject of just pride that they met and separated not only without offence or altercation, but without accident. There were no barriers and no policemen to keep order, but there was less jostling of vehicles, and less conflict of persons than ordinarily occur at a single levée at St James's Palace or Dublin Castle. Three-fourths of the multitude were probably teetotalers. Before Father Mathew's mission the experiment of collecting half a million of people at one place, and exciting them with stimulating oratory, would have been perilous, probably disastrous. But the teetotalers were kept in discipline not only by cool brains but by the pride of class; they were conscious that they were the peace-preservers and a moral police. A characteristic incident was afterwards told of their discipline. Three men observed loitering in a little town twenty miles from the hill were questioned by the passers-by why they were not at the meeting, and they admitted that the teetotalers of the parish would not let them march with them because they had broken the pledge. The presence of women, who probably formed a fifth of the attendance, was a further restraint upon confusion or incivility. From the demeanour of the people it became plain that they had judged rightly who selected Tara as the site of a national demonstration. Many of the touching and solemn memories associated with it were probably unknown to the multitude, but at least they knew that *there* once stood the palace where the Irish princes met in council while the island was still ruled by its ancient kings; that Patrick, the apostle of their race, had *there* preached the Gospel of Christ to pagan Chiefs and Druids; and that, within living memory, men of Irish birth had fought there for the old cause of national independence. Before the arrival of O'Connell, successive troops of visitors inspected the "Mound of the Hostages," "The Stone of Destiny," and the site of Temora, and listened eagerly to disquisitions on their history; but a deeper enthusiasm was

reserved for the "Croppies' Grave." Twenty banners were planted around it, and the people knelt down bareheaded, and prayed for the repose of their souls who had died for Ireland. When O'Connell arrived the bands saluted him with triumphant music, and the people applauded and blessed the leader who typified their desire to be a nation once again.

To address such a meeting and be heard was a physical impossibility; but in truth it was not a meeting in the ordinary sense, but what in Southern Europe is called a "pronunciamento"—a muster of men already devoted to a public cause, and no longer needing to be schooled in its principles. In that sense the demonstration was a formidable fact. There were more men present than possessed Scotland when Wallace raised the standard of independence, or Athens in the days of her world renown. The discipline was marvellous, and among the unregimented army which occupied the heights of Tara that day were old soldiers who had fought in the Peninsula and at Waterloo, and future soldiers destined to fight at Alma and Inkermann, at Delhi and Cawnpore: and some who in after-times thronged the ranks of Meagher's Irish Brigade at Antietam and Fredricsburg, and turned the tide of battle with Phil Sheridan at Cedar Creek:

> "Nor were there wanting spirits then
> Of minds more trained and deeper ken,
> To marshal and to lead."[1]

On the platform, in the flush of youth and hope, there were men who have since won notable professional or political success at home, or helped to found cities, to discipline armies, and to rear new States in three quarters of the globe. In all popular movements there is a crowd of idle and thoughtless persons who run after a political excitement as a boy runs after a hoop; but this element was small among a people greatly moved by substantial wrongs and engrossing hopes. The mass of the men at Tara were possessed by intense conviction akin to that which made irresistible soldiers of farmers and farm-labourers under Cromwell and Washington. The scene was one to excite intoxicating pride and hope. The historic memories which the place revived, the confidence which an unexampled muster of men begot, the familiar music of the country in their ears, the green flag they loved streaming in the wind, raised enthusiasm to a point when difficult achievements become easy. With a Carnot duly commissioned to organise and direct that immense mass of physical and moral power, a new nation might that day have been born.

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[1] "Spirit of the Nation."

At Tara the speeches were not remarkable, but at subsequent meetings O'Connell spoke of the success of the movement with more and more confidence. "I am called Washington," he said; "he was driven into the field, and obliged to take up arms; but I know a trick worth two of that. But if the Russians, or the Scotch, ay, or the English, were to assail us against the constitution and the law, they know little of me who think that I would be amongst the last who would stand up for Ireland."

In Connaught he declared that the end of the struggle was near at hand. "Rejoice, for your fatherland is fated to become a nation again. Rejoice, for the day-star of Irish liberty is already on the horizon, and the full moon of freedom shall beam round your native land. The hour is approaching, the day is near, the period is fast coming, when—believe me, who never deceived you—your country shall be a nation once more."[1] And this poetry of the orator was translated into unequivocal prose by Mr John O'Connell at the next meeting of the Association. "The Repeal of the Union," he declared, "could not be delayed longer than eight or ten months."[2]

A writer, well known at that time for the part he took in disseminating the opinions of the Anti-Corn Law League, affirmed that he had observed among the crowd at Tara a number of men who had been hired to dog the steps of Mr Cobden and excite disturbances at his meetings, and he intimated that they were sent to Ireland on a similar errand.[3] But if so, the attempt was too rash to be persisted in. It was understood, however, that other official agents began to make their appearance—Government short-hand writers sent with the manifest purpose of providing evidence in case of a prosecution. The rumour created great indignation, and this feeling was likely to have exhibited itself in an uncivil reception of the officials, if O'Connell's good humour and good sense had not satisfied the popular feeling by turning the laugh against them. At Skibbereen he insisted that they should be treated with the utmost courtesy; and when they were duly seated and had their note-books and pencils in hand, he advanced to the front of the platform and began to address the people in Irish!

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[1] Roscommon Meeting, August 20, 1843.

[2] Association Meeting, August 23.

[3] "One who Whistled at the Plough," in a letter to the *Morning Chronicle.*

It is unnecessary to follow the other meetings into detail. At Connemara—"Cuin-na-marra," the country of harbours [1]—a primitive Western population living on the skirts of the Atlantic, who had never seen O'Connell or taken part in any political movement, came in multitudes to offer him their assistance. At Clontibret, the "gap of the north," a hundred thousand Ulster Catholics—thinly sprinkled, it was said, with Orange converts to nationality—declared for Repeal. In several of the Munster counties there were meetings which would have been impressive by numbers and enthusiasm if Tara had not raised the standard to an unapproachable height. It was now late in autumn, and it was determined to conclude the series of monster meetings. But it was desirable that they should not end in an anti-climax, and the final meetings were assigned to historical sites which would appeal to the enthusiasm of the people as much as Tara itself. The first was fixed to be held on the Rath of Mullaghmast. The meeting was to be a provincial one for all Leinster; and the requisitionists included over a hundred members of corporate bodies, two hundred and eighty clergymen, and over two thousand of the gentry freeholders and burgesses of Leinster. If the opinion of the metropolitan province was to have any weight, here was an authentic expression of its wishes, excepting only the Protestant gentry and clergy. The attendance was immense, but the people as usual were peaceable and good-humoured. A circumstance in the day's proceedings which was afterwards greatly misconstrued must be noticed. A national cap, shaped like the old "Milesian Crown," was presented to O'Connell by a deputation headed by John Hogan, the sculptor, and Henry MacManus, the painter. O'Connell expressed himself honoured by such an offering from the hands of one of the most eminent sculptors in Europe, and he promised to wear the cap for the remainder of his life; which he did. To the eyes of unfriendly critics it was the Irish Crown which was presented and accepted. But in truth it was simply a cap of Irish materials and manufacture, and this was its history. The only symbol hitherto adopted by the national party was a "Repeal Button," a vulgar and unsightly object which never came into extensive use. I suggested in the *Nation* that a cap of national device, associated with national memories, might be designed which would supersede the "Glengarry hoof" and other imported articles

[1] Or Ceann-na-Meara, head of the sea, for the root is disputed.

then in general use. I obtained the assistance of Henry MacManus, and a cap which closely resembled an authentic cap of Irish origin was designed, and it was presented to O'Connell that his example might give it currency. But it was not destined to succeed, and indeed it did not deserve success. Many of the remains of ancient Irish art are of singular beauty, and this cap, when made of rich velvet, embroidered with artistic ornaments, and placed on the commanding forehead of O'Connell, did not want a certain antique dignity; but in the fabric employed for common use—a sort of grey shoddy, relieved by a feeble wreath of green shamrocks—it bore an awkward and fatal resemblance to a night-cap.[1]

The final meeting was fixed to be held at Clontarf, on the shores of Dublin Bay. It was on this ground Brian Borhoime defeated the Danes a century before the English invasion; and Clontarf was a sound as grateful to the ears of Irishmen as Bunker's Hill to Americans, or Bannockburn to Scotchmen. It was to be the last meeting of the year, as Monster Meetings had sufficiently answered the purpose for which they were designed—of mustering the nation to sanction the demand made in its name.

It is necessary to revert for a moment to some events contemporary with those which have been just recorded. The Duke of Wellington had promised to provide for the public peace, and he set about providing for it on a liberal scale. Thirty-five thousand troops of all arms were distributed throughout the island;—three times as many as occupied England at the time of the Revolution of '88. The barracks were pierced with loop-holes and became fortresses against insurrection. Forts and Martello Towers were put in a state of defence, garrisons were strengthened, the supply of arms and materials of war largely increased, and war steamers were stationed on the sea-coast and navigable rivers. To provide against the risk of seduction or surprise, for the exact object of the precaution is uncertain, the soldiers who attended Catholic churches on Sunday went in marching order, with guns, bayonets, and knapsacks ready for immediate service. The Duke was manifestly on the *qui vive*. But it was whispered, under the

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[1] Thomas Carlyle visited Conciliation Hall in 1846 with me and some of my friends, and nothing seems to have impressed his imagination more than this unhappy head-dress. In all his writings about O'Connell after that period "Green Cappery" is the phrase he employs to describe his proceedings. Some critics who were disposed to think that Mr Carlyle would have been more tolerant of a national symbol had it been a blue bonnet instead of a green cap, sometimes spoke of his own ecstatics about Scotch Puritans as "Blue Bonnetry."

breath, in official circles that the renowned soldier, now in his seventy-fifth year, had become somewhat crotchety and contentious, and that his strategy no longer satisfied the judgment of military men, as of old. An anecdote circulated in clubs and drawing-rooms was supposed to typify the change. Some one (so the story ran) asked a question in the Duke's presence about musk rats which he volunteered to answer. He described them as being made an article of commerce by being sealed up in thumb-bottles to preserve the scent. "Musk rats must be very small?" his interlocutor remarked. "No," said the Duke; "they are rats of the ordinary size." "Then the thumb-bottles used must be inordinately large?" "No, sir," replied the Duke severely; "they are of the ordinary size." "Ah," whispered a military secretary, "that's what we are doing at the Horse Guards nowadays, putting rats of the ordinary size into thumb-bottles of the ordinary size." Five years earlier Lord Palmerston had described the Duke as "breaking fast,"[1] but he was still strong enough to be formidable.

The Whigs, like the Duke, were also on the alert. The opinion was becoming general that Peel must fall in the coming session, and the legitimate result of the Irish movement would, they were of opinion, be accomplished when Lord John Russell returned to Downing Street. There was a secret fear among men who agreed in little else, that the success of the Whigs would be perilous to the national party. They could do so much to seduce and so much to intimidate. "They are like Dundrum Bay," exclaimed MacNevin, "where one does not know whether most to fear the rocks or the sand-banks." The Archbishop of Tuam hinted this fear in a letter to the Association, the scope of which was that there must be no compromise with Whigs or Tories. Mr Burke Roche echoed him; and MacNevin in the *Nation* recalled the offences of the Whigs as a party, and vehemently warned them that Ireland would be "as great a difficulty to Palmerston as to Peel." Davis did not concur in the length to which this policy was carried in the *Nation*, and in August he wrote to me from Cork, where he had gone on an autumn excursion:—

"MacN——'s article on the Whigs has given great offence in many quarters. I think, to say truth, it said too much, and looked like a cruel attack, when the Irish Whigs at least were doing nobly in the House. Take some opportunity to distinguish that you did not mean them (S. O'Brien and

[1] Mr Evelyn Ashley's "Life of Lord Palmerston." Lord Campbell in his Autobiography reports that in 1842 the Duke was so enfeebled by age and disease that when he rose to address the House painful apprehensions that he would discredit himself were excited in the breasts of both friends and opponents.—"Life of Lord Campbell," vol. ii. p. 161.

the like) in attacking the Whigs, and do not notice anything in the London Press on it. I speak advisedly. We have need of tolerants as well as allies for a while."

An eminent Whig barrister[1] who became a judge, addressed a remonstrance to me at the same time, through a common friend, on the injustice of charging on the Whig party offences for which Repealers were at least as guilty as they. He affirmed, for example, that the worst Whig blunder, sending a Scotch lawyer to displace Plunket, had O'Connell for its principal promoter, Lord Campbell having refused to come to Ireland as Chancellor except on a distinct promise of O'Connell's support. This explanation was not calculated to remove our apprehensions; for the unspoken fear that lay at the bottom of these public warnings was the fear that the Whigs would have too stringent an influence on the policy of O'Connell.

In the autumn an English Whig, trained to vigilance and circumspection among a dangerous population in India, visited Ireland and published his impressions in a London newspaper.[2] They attracted universal attention at the time; and it is still worth pausing to note the conclusions at this critical period of an expert, intending doubtless to be scrupulously accurate according to his knowledge. He had set out on his journey regarding the demand for Repeal as a gigantic piece of blarney, but he found among the people intense desire and genuine belief on the subject. They spoke of their hopes spontaneously, and *apropos* of every topic, like men engrossed by one idea. They had taken up universally O'Connell's doctrine, that they must not be the aggressors. "We don't mean to go to war with the Government, but if the Government goes to war with us, then the boys will rise." The methods and agencies of guerilla warfare were constantly in their mouths. They declared there was no want of arms in the country, and if the people were of one mind they could turn every agricultural implement into a weapon. They counted on the sympathy of the army, where half the soldiers were Irishmen and every Irishman a Repealer. They denied that the Presbyterians of the North would fight against them at the bidding of their greedy and oppressive landlords. They counted upon assistance from foreign countries, and assistance in the shape of a diversion from the Chartists of Wales and the manufacturing districts of England. A remark invariably made was that though the affair

[1] Baron Deasy. The letter is printed in my "Memoirs of Thomas Davis."

[2] The writer was Mr (since Sir Charles) Trevelyan, brother-in-law of Mr Macaulay and father of the present Chief Secretary for Ireland (1882). The letters were signed "Philalethes," and addressed to the *Morning Chronicle.*

might begin in Ireland it would not end in Ireland. The people, animated with those sentiments, he found, to his amazement, not only singularly sober, but advancing in industry, good order, and respect for the laws. Faction fights had ceased, and shillelaghs were rarely to be seen, except when they were used for firewood. When the time came for showing colours he believed the men of property who figured on Repeal platforms would side with the Government to save their estates. But he regarded it as beyond doubt that a more influential class, the Catholic clergy, had gone into the movement in the same spirit as the people. There was another estate in the Repeal organisation of the existence of which the people of England were imperfectly instructed—the young men of the capital. As far as the difference in the circumstances of the two countries admitted, they answered to the *jeunes gens de Paris*. They were public-spirited, enthusiastic men, possessed, as it seemed to him, of that crude information on political subjects which induced several of the Whig and Conservative leaders to be Radicals in their youth. They supplied all the good writing, the history, the poetry, and the political philosophy, such as it was, of the party. Though O'Connell was the origin and author of all this mischief, the Whig traveller regarded him as the chief reliance for the preservation of peace. He at any rate never intended fighting. The people did; and it might be confidently predicted that if there was a fight it would be a sectarian one; for the two creeds, he was persuaded, were impatient to assail each other.

This last statement was the one most offensive to Irish feeling, but it was immediately denied on authority which may be regarded as conclusive. A number of Presbyterian and Congregational ministers, constantly travelling as missionaries, or living as resident ministers, in Munster and Connaught, declared that they met civility, kindness, and fair play from the Catholic people, and that there were no facts to justify the imputation that sectarian passions were at work.[1] In this respect at least the tourist was certainly mistaken. A directly opposite sentiment had begun to prevail; the result of which was seen a few years later, when Presbyterian ministers were sent as political missionaries to the South, and Catholic priests and the remnant of the Young Irelanders as political missionaries to the North, in the promotion of a common purpose—a secure tenure for the tenant farmer.

[1] Letters of the Rev. Joseph Fisher, Presbyterian minister, Galway; the Rev. E. H. Allen, Presbyterian minister, Athlone, to the *Banner of Ulster* (organ of the Presbyterian Church), and of the Rev. E. B. Gibson, Independent minister, Mallow; the Rev. J. Godkin, Independent missionary, and the Rev. Alexander King, Independent minister, Cork, to the *Nation*.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CLONTARF MEETING PROHIBITED—ARREST OF THE LEADERS.

For fifteen months the national movement had met no effectual check. In recruits, in foreign and native "sympathisers," to employ a word then much in use, and in spirit and purpose, it visibly gathered strength from week to week. The Conservative Press still spoke of measures of repression; but it seemed probable that this language was employed to keep up the spirit of a party threatened at the moment with a Parliamentary defeat. Thoughtful men did not doubt that Peel must do something more to satisfy the Irish squires and to enable him to face the House of Commons; but if O'Connell maintained his attitude, what could Peel do that would not end in another repulse? Petty expedients would fail as they had ignominiously failed already; and if he attempted to trample down a peaceful meeting under the feet of soldiery, O'Connell at the head of an organised people was pledged in the most precise language to resist the attempt. After the musters at Tara and Mullaghmast, the belief that he could resist it grew wider, and therewith a conviction that he would never be called upon to do so by a Minister so cautious. "Peel will not fight," was the common verdict of clubs and quidnuncs. But this smiling prospect was overcast by a sudden tempest.

The Clontarf meeting was fixed to be held on Sunday, 8th October. On the previous Friday evening the *Mail* announced that the proposed meeting would be suppressed. The Privy Council had determined—so the portentous announcement ran—that a proclamation should be published next morning "cautioning her Majesty's subjects against attending meetings convened under the pretext of petitioning for the Repeal of the Union, such meetings being calculated to excite alarm and lead to a breach of the peace."[1]

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[1] It is proper to notice that a reason was assigned at the moment for prohibiting the Clontarf meeting, which on investigation proved of slender value. O'Connell had spoken at some of the monster meetings of "Mountaineer Cavalry advancing four deep

The long-threatened conjuncture had come at last, and for four-and-twenty hours men could speak of nothing else but the problem how O'Connell would deal with it. Not only his own nation, but all the nations of the civilised world, had heard his protestations that if the right of public meeting were assailed by force, he would maintain it by force, and welcome all the assistance which other countries could furnish for that purpose. The Clontarf meeting differed in no respect from the long list of its predecessors, and if it could be forbidden and dispersed on the authority of an order in the *Dublin Gazette*, that fundamental right was at an end. A proclamation was a mere advertisement, and had no legal authority if it violated, or restricted, the legal rights of the community. The occasion for making a stand had clearly come, or it never could come; and though the time might well be considered past for questioning the legality of such assemblies, after thirty meetings had been held without objection, and though the allegation that they were calculated to provoke a breach of the peace was quite untrue, yet the conflict had been so long foreseen that the action of the Government cannot be said to have taken the national party by surprise or caught it unprepared. On the contrary, it was singularly well prepared—in all respects but one. A nation so long without a senate, a flag, an army, a judiciary, or a government, had re-created a national organism which embraced the rudiments of all these institutions. A virtual government sat in Conciliation Hall, a popular and trusted magistracy had begun to administer justice in the Arbitration Courts; a fund equivalent to a poll tax was regularly paid by voluntary contribution, and wherever the green flag was raised, an army, in numbers, in obedience, and almost in discipline, gathered round it. Foreign nations tendered that passive and active sympathy which had enabled the Netherlands

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and filing to the rear with remarkable precision." And probably on this hint one of the Secretaries of the Clontarf meeting, Mr Frank Morgan, a solicitor, issued an advertisement summoning the attendance of "Repeal Cavalry" on that occasion, and directing the method of their muster and march. This was the reason in question. The advertisement, however, attracted notice, and was immediately altered: "Mounted Repealers," for example, being substituted for "Repeal Cavalry." This alteration was made before any intention of interrupting the meeting became public. After the proclamation Mr Morgan, at a meeting of the Association, gallantly declared that the advertisement had been his sole work. "It was drawn," he said, "by his own hand, copied by his clerk, and inserted in the newspapers solely through his instrumentality" (Repeal Association, Oct. 11, '43). It will be seen later that the Duke of Wellington, and necessarily the Government, understood from the beginning that it was not O'Connell's act, and its use as a justification for stopping the Clontarf meeting was a mere pretext. See note, page 188.

in the seventeenth century, and the North American colonies in the eighteenth, and Greece and Belgium in the nineteenth, to triumph over difficulties as serious.

The nation was ready to adopt and support the decision of the leader to whom it had entrusted the conduct of the campaign, and his wisdom and resources were now brought to a decisive test.

What ought to have been the conduct of a national leader in the circumstances in which Ireland was then placed? Since this question has become an historical problem, the balance of opinion leans to the conclusion that O'Connell and Peel had between them brought Ireland to a position from which she could not retreat with honour, and still less with safety. Many Englishmen who applaud Belgium and Hungary, Greece and Italy, for resisting the supremacy of foreigners, regard English interest as a thing sacred and exceptional, and in nowise subject to laws which regulate the relation of other States to each other; but the rest of mankind will judge differently. In 1843 the two main conditions necessary to justify national resistance existed together in Ireland; there were intolerable wrongs for which a peaceful remedy was scornfully refused, and there were solid grounds for believing that the resistance would be successful.

The bulk of the people endured privations unknown in any other civilised country. The prosperity of the middle class, which rests upon trade and commerce, had been basely sacrificed to English monopoly. The gains which remained—those of agriculture and pasturage—were enjoyed in great part by absentee proprietors of English birth or blood, and were carried away annually as a subsidy to England. The chief public employments were in the hands of strangers. A profusely endowed Church was maintained at the cost of the nation for the benefit of a minority, numerically insignificant. An Irish constitution solemnly declared perpetual by the Parliaments of England and Ireland respectively, had a generation before been overthrown by corruption and force, and the proposal to revive it was now put under the ban of the empire. Men of immense possessions, whose fortunes were involved in the maintenance of English connection, admitted and proclaimed that there were wrongs calling for immediate redress; but Parliament had refused to consider these admitted wrongs; to consider, not whether the Union ought to be maintained, but whether the international agreement ought to be honestly carried out. To all complaint it had replied brutally: "This is our will, and you must accept it, right or wrong."

The probabilities of success must be tested by the fortunes of other nations in kindred circumstances. A people of eight millions fighting to retain their own country is an immense force. Nine-tenths of the men capable of bearing arms were Repealers; they were flushed with the enthusiasm which speedily turns peasants and artisans into soldiers, and the passionate conviction that their cause was the cause of divine and human justice which works wonders. They were of the same stock as the soldiers who had carried the eagles of Napoleon into all the capitals of the Continent, and enabled Dumouriez to face Europe in arms. The young men "who wrote and spoke as the Greeks fought at Thermopylæ" were not, indeed, soldiers; but a national revolution turned such men into soldiers, administrators, and diplomatists under the Long Parliament, the American Congress, and the French Convention. All revolutions seem impossible till they are accomplished; but we know that before the invention of rifled cannon and arms of precision the chances were in favour of enthusiasm against discipline. Courts and garrisons still capitulated to a sudden rising of the people; and in Paris and Vienna, in Berlin and Naples, the soldier turned his back on the burgher. Years later an Italian sailor without military training, and unsupported by artillery or cavalry, overran an ancient kingdom, and put to flight a dynasty which reckoned its annals by centuries; and a Hungarian journalist commissioned by the confidence of his nation to call them to arms, saw regiment after regiment, which had long served Austria with conspicuous fidelity, break away from her ranks to muster under their native flag. Contemporary opinion is a formidable auxiliary in war, and contemporary opinion, except in the case of a few despotic Governments, was with Ireland. The Executive of the United States had at its head an avowed Repealer; and received its impulse, and in the last resource its instructions, from a democratic population in a decisive proportion Irish, and which through all its being was proud that the Republic should be recognised as the defence and refuge of liberty. In France a party destined soon to attain to the government of the State, and who meantime enjoyed wide influence, openly proffered assistance. It is probable that many officers from France and America would have taken service under the national leader as willingly as under any prince in Europe. The bulk of the working class in England, and a section of the middle class, thought the Irish claims well founded, and that to answer them by the sword was naked tyranny.

They might have failed; but had they fought and failed could the

result have been more disastrous? Those who in later times have seen hecatombs slaughtered by famine greater than fell in three French Revolutions, and multitudes exiled by political despair greater than the tyranny of Louis XIV. banished from France, may well doubt whether to fight and fail could have entailed calamities so great as befell them because they had incurred the hatred of England by threatening resistance and the contempt of England by failing to perform what they threatened.[1]

But if the duty of a national leader at that time was to resist, it is certain that it was a task for which O'Connell's rare and prodigious faculties were altogether unsuited. He was not only unskilled in military science, but, like most men trained in the feminine contests of the Bar, he disliked and undervalued it. He was peculiarly identified with the doctrine that peaceful agitation is a sufficient instrument of resistance to oppression, and he was fast approaching his seventieth year, when a man cannot change the habits of a lifetime. He had made no preparations, had no military advisers or agents capable of turning a loose muster of men into an army, and he had provided neither arms nor military stores. At times, perhaps, the enthusiasm of the people stimulated him into a momentary paroxysm of hardihood, but it was only momentary; it never became a fixed design, the ways and means of which had been carefully thought out. Looking back, with a wide range of facts in view, it scarcely admits of doubt that he never deliberately contemplated resistance to the British troops, under any circumstances whatever. He felt unfit for military enterprises, he retained a vivid recollection of the horrors of '98, he knew how many attempts to resist England had ended in disaster, he remembered how often the people had been betrayed by pretended patriots, and he doubtless resolved to limit himself to what could be accomplished by the accustomed method, be the same more or less. But in such circumstances it was a fearful mistake, alike in morals and in strategy, to specifically threaten resistance.

The worst result of this mistake was that it forfeited two resources,

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[1] General Perronet Thompson put the chances below their proper estimate when he declared, as an experienced soldier, that the organised force in the hands of her enemies was such as Ireland would have no physical chance of resisting, if free access were given to the relative strength of the two parties. But if anything should happen to blunt the effect of that first shock, and give Ireland one clear year for preparation at home, and for the operation of cool reflection in the masses of the English people, the chance of overpowering Ireland would be at an end; and an Irish envoy might prepare his official uniform for presentation at the Court of Queen Victoria.

either of which might have succeeded in the end. Had he maintained unchangeably his original attitude of a peaceful agitator, refusing to pass for a moment in his own person the broad line which separates opinion from force, the movement would, no doubt, have wanted much of the *élan* which inspired it; there might have been fewer monster meetings, and no Mallow Defiance; but his position would be impregnable, and every successive Minister would have found it more difficult to rule Ireland contrary to the ascertained wishes of the Irish people. A pace behind him there would still be seen daring and impatient spirits proffering an alternative which gives moral force its stringency. Grattan had succeeded because there was no doubt that the Volunteers were ready to follow the example of the Militia of North America; and something of the same weight and significance might have been given to this movement by the attitude of men for whose aims the leader would have no responsibility. In some of the national difficulties which have since occurred, during the European Revolutions of '48, or the Indian Mutiny, or the Crimean War, the English Minister would have capitulated, as Fox capitulated in '82, and re-established the Irish Parliament. But men cannot have the benefit of two contradictory policies at the same time; and by adopting them alternately he forfeited the advantages of both. After the Mallow Defiance the people were impatient of the slow methods of constitutional agitation; and when the Mallow Defiance proved (as it was now about to prove) to be merely a rhetorical device, the Government were contemptuous of further appeals to the wrath and power of the people.

English critics, when the danger was over, attributed O'Connell's conduct to the basest motives—greed for money and the like; but in truth his motives were not base in the sense these critics suggested. He had frightened Wellington and Peel fourteen years earlier with the fear of Civil War, and he hoped to frighten them again. Nor was the hypothesis wildly improbable, if he had not ruined the experiment by omitting to provide for the alternative of keeping his word in case they were not frightened; for it is idle to threaten with an empty musket.[1]

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[1] Simple persons who regard it as inexpiably wicked to have contemplated physical force, even for the deliverance of a nation from misery, should know that within three or four years of this time Ministers of England were secretly stimulating insurrection in a country with which England was at peace, for the purpose of avenging a diplomatic disappointment. Lord Palmerston, on the 16th September 1846, when his policy in the business of the Spanish marriage was thwarted, wrote to the English

On Saturday at noon the Committee of the Association met at the Corn Exchange to await the threatened proclamation. But the long hours of the noon and the afternoon passed without Government making any sign other than the arrival of five additional regiments from England and Scotland. It was approaching the grey of the October evening when at half-past three o'clock a proclamation was at length issued. It forbade the projected meeting, cautioned all persons whatsoever against attending it, and enjoined magistrates and officers entrusted with the public peace to aid in preventing, or, in case of need, in dispersing it.

How was this proclamation to take effect? In two hours night would have fallen and the warning could not be read. At the dawn of the next day the people of the wide plains of Fingal and the populous towns and villages throughout Meath and Kildare would begin to move towards the sea-shore. Already a considerable number of Repealers had arrived in Dublin from Manchester, Liverpool, Belfast, and other places remote from the centre. The meeting had been announced for three weeks, it was advertised for a fortnight, and the prohibition issued only the evening before it was about to assemble. Popular suspicion suggested the worst motives for the delay, and cases were cited from Irish history, and passed from mouth to mouth, where massacres had been premeditated in the camp, or the castle of the Lord Deputy, and effected by such sinister device as this.

The Committee deliberated; and O'Connell announced at once that it was his intention to submit to the proclamation. He was only anxious and unhappy, he said, lest there should not be time to prevent the people assembling on the morrow. If they assembled and found the ground in possession of soldiers, a collision would be inevitable. The proclamation he considered illegal, but there was still "a shred of legality" covering the action of the Government, and "the time for resistance had not come." Thomas Reynolds, a courtier of the people,

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Minister at Madrid: "My dear Bulwer,—I entirely approve of what you have been doing, and say, as Lord Anglesey did to the Irish, 'Agitate, agitate, agitate'—only take care not to be mixed up with any scheme for insurrection. But, though you must steer clear of any such thing, you need not interfere to overrule those who from knowledge of their own may think that they will obtain sufficient national support to make any attempt of this kind worth risking." And the same simple persons should know that the Minister wrote this caution on the hint of one of his colleagues who a little later was commissioned to put down rebellion in Ireland. Three days before this note was despatched Lord Clarendon had written to Lord Palmerston, "I should think that Bulwer will require some warning upon this, and upon not openly encouraging any insurrectionary movement."—Lord Dalling's "Life of Palmerston," vol. iii.

who had followed O'Connell through a long succession of political movements, without believing too confidently in his methods or agencies, whispered to a friend as the Committee broke up, "Ireland was won at Clontarf, and she is going to be lost at Clontarf."

Immediate measures were taken to prevent the people from meeting. O'Connell issued an address exhorting them to submit to the proclamation for the same reasons he had employed in the Committee. It was posted during the night at the centres of population within twenty miles of Clontarf, and confidential agents of the Association, aided by the Catholic clergy, were abroad at dawn to explain and enforce it. These precautions were successful, and the meeting was prevented. When day dawned, Conquer Hill—a site overlooking the ancient battle-field—was occupied by horse, foot, and artillery; the latter with unlimbered guns and lighted matches, and the cannon of the Pigeon House Fort were in position to sweep the approaches from the city. During the day the commander of the forces and the Lord Lieutenant visited the ground, but there was no enemy to encounter.

The abandonment of the meeting was hailed with savage triumph by the anti-repeal journals in England and Ireland, and O'Connell was taunted with vain-glorious promises which had come to nothing. It was not easy to answer these scoffs satisfactorily; it was impossible indeed to answer them at all, except on the incredible hypothesis that the circumstances which would justify resistance had not yet arisen.

To the young men this period was one of bitter trouble. The power which they helped to create was being recklessly squandered; the policy to which they stood pledged was practically relinquished; and yet their duty in the premisses was by no means clear. They could not arrest O'Connell's course any more than a council of war, who foresaw the disasters of the Russian campaign, could have turned back Napoleon at Coblentz. The national honour was pledged to resistance, but resistance without the concurrence of O'Connell would certainly fail ignominiously. In Ireland, and before England and Europe, there was one man responsible for the guidance of the national movement, and to anticipate the time or place at which he thought it prudent to resist aggression, while he still spoke of resisting it, would have been regarded on all sides as a fatal and unpardonable offence. Hitherto he had succeeded in every encounter with the Government, and he still promised success on condition of obedience. In politics almost as much as in war it is necessary in a supreme crisis to follow the chosen leader with a fidelity which postpones criticism till his commission is withdrawn.

If we had denounced the weakness and bad faith of the change openly in the Association, a feud would have sprung up which would have shaken the confidence of the people in success more fatally than even an ignominious retreat. If the popular trust in O'Connell was rudely destroyed, nothing entitled to the name, or possessing the chances, of a national movement could have been maintained. The circumstances of the hour gave these considerations peculiar force. He was on the eve of a contest with the Government in the courts of law, he was the special object of the enemy's attack; to arraign him before his friends also at such a moment was a course from which even less generous natures would shrink. And to men whose life was only beginning, who had boundless confidence in the future, who might hope to long outlive O'Connell, the error of to-day, it seemed certain, would be corrected on some happier day. On these grounds we felt that much must be endured with such patience as we could command.

On the other hand, to acquiesce, either actively or passively, involved personal dishonour and serious public danger. It was not forgotten that O'Connell had laid aside the Repeal question before, nor that he was constantly surrounded and solicited by Whig allies, some of whom honestly believed the best thing he could do for the country was to renew the surrender of 1834, and all of whom were alive to the fact that it was the best thing for their party. And in guarding the cause the young men had a duty peculiar and special from which no one could relieve them. They were the trustees of a new generation. The best recruits of the National party had joined it from sympathy with them, and would not be held an hour after this sympathy was destroyed. The habitual readers of the *Nation*, approaching a quarter of a million, constituted a monster meeting which could not be disbanded by proclamation.[1] For their teaching the young men were as responsible as O'Connell was for the guidance of the Association, and the one aim of their lives was that the National cause should triumph. After careful deliberation it was determined to indicate our dissent from the course O'Connell had taken as clearly as would be generous in the face of a triumphant enemy and towards the chief whom that enemy aimed to humiliate. For the rest we could wait for the future. The future belongs to the young and self-reliant, and the policy of the country could not long be directed by a man who had passed his grand climacteric.

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[1] Readers of the *Nation*. See note in the Appendix.

The writers of the *Nation*—I accordingly said in the next number—did not agree with the new policy of O'Connell. They would not risk splitting up the national party, however, by contesting it at that moment. The post of commander belonged to him. He was accredited and responsible, and they needs must follow the only chief who could muster an effective army, though they distrusted his plan of battle.[1] And a fortnight later Davis took up the subject—"He who harmed person or property in seeking Repeal," he said, "was an enemy to the country; but if it was necessary to preach peace it was still more necessary to preach perseverance. Retreat," he continued, painting a picture the worst features of which time unhappily realised—"retreat would bring us the woes of war—without its chances or its pride."

"The enemy, elate at our discomfiture, would press upon our rear. The landlord would use every privilege till he had reduced his farms to pastures. The Minister would rush in and tear away the last root of nationality. The peasant, finding his long-promised hopes of freedom and security by moral means gone, and left unled to his own impulses, would league with his neighbour serfs, and ruin others in the vain hope of redressing himself. The day would be dark with tyranny, and the night red with vengeance. The military triumph of the rack-renter or the Whiteboy would be the happiest issue of the strife."

It must not be supposed that O'Connell's retreat was as visible at the moment as it is now in the perspective of history. The people were perplexed and anxious, but not disheartened. At the next meeting of the Association the attendance was immense; it was found necessary to adjourn from Conciliation Hall to the Abbey Street Theatre, and after the theatre was crowded in all parts a multitude were still excluded for want of space. O'Connell's speech was eagerly expected, but it failed to satisfy expectation. He attempted the impossible task of reconciling what he had said in the flush of success with what he had done when the hour of trial had arrived.

As a lawyer, he pronounced the proclamation to be a gross violation of law, and the delay in issuing it an unpardonable offence. But he had recommended submission. Resistance was not justifiable until even the shape and form of legality disappeared and the red arm of violence was distinctly raised. "If the people," he said in feeble echo of language which had made inspiring music while it was believed to express his actual purpose—"if the people, contrary to the Constitution, were interfered with in the exercise of their rights—if such a thing could be imagined, there was no man more ready to say in such a case—Defend yourselves."

As respects the national movement, his plan was ready. Before Parliament met he would call simultaneous parochial meetings, by which the

[1] *Nation*, Oct 21.

entire population of the country would be assembled at one time, each parish within its own boundaries. Though the Government might prevent monster meetings, he did not see how they could reach a monster meeting of the whole Irish nation, convened in this manner. He would also press on the appointment of the Arbitration Courts and the plan for the revival of the Irish Parliament. He had another project, devised by persons of the highest financial capacity, which he intended submitting to the Association: the formation of a company with shares of £100, by whose operations the interest on debts and mortgages would be paid and spent in Ireland instead of England.

The trumpet gave forth a woefully uncertain sound. The people expected and missed in the language of the leader some foreshadow of the method by which he expected to accomplish the task to which he stood pledged—the Repeal of the Union. The will of the country on the subject had been already ascertained by the monster meetings, and simultaneous meetings could not express it with more certainty. Simultaneous meetings, when they were originally proposed by Sheil in the Catholic Association, were formidable, because they were regarded by the Government as the possible muster of an insurrectionary army. But they could not have this meaning after the transaction which had just occurred. And the strange incongruity of a financial device of doubtful character, understood to have originated as a private speculation by Mr John Reynolds, presented at such a moment as one of the agencies for carrying the national cause to success, struck thoughtful men with dismay—with such dismay indeed that it was silently dropped by O'Connell, who never mentioned it again. The other business of the day was less disheartening. The resolutions prepared for the Clontarf meeting were adopted by the Association on the motion of the Rev. Mr Tyrrell, a clergyman of the district who had distinguished himself by exertions to forewarn the people that the meeting was abandoned; and in the evening the banquet which ordinarily followed a monster meeting was held in the Rotundo, where two thousand people attended, and exhibited no falling off in enthusiasm. They only desired to be shown what they could do for the cause that would give it any effectual help. Among the Liverpool delegates at the dinner was a young commercial agent, Terence Bellew M'Manus, then in the prime of a vigorous manhood. He had been my friend since, boys together, in a northern town we saw, with angry eyes, the processions maintained by Orangemen to humiliate Ulster Catholics on the anniversary of their final defeat. When the proclamation was issued he hurried to me to say that, knowing the English people well, he was persuaded that if we fell back now our claims from that day would be treated with contempt;

it would take more than one bloody and successful battle to regain the ground we were abandoning without an effort. He spoke a sentiment which was seething in many minds, but there was no other answer possible than to remind him that O'Connell, who had decided this question, was in the first instance entitled to decide it. Sooner or later, in the long run, all of us would doubtless have to consider it anew for ourselves. I quoted to him a fragment of some verses in which Davis had just expressed the feelings of the hour with genuine passion, and which five years later, when M'Manus and I stood in a critical position, were destined to reappear :—

"We must not fail ; we must not fail ; however force or fraud assail ;
By honour, pride, and policy, by heaven itself, we must be free.

We promised loud, we boasted high, to break our country's chains or die,
And should we quail that country's name will be the synonym of shame.

We took the starving peasant's mite to aid in winning back his right.
We took the priceless trust of youth ; their freedom must redeem our truth.

Earth is not deep enough to hide the coward slave who shrinks aside ;
Hell is not hot enough to scathe the perjured wretch who breaks his faith.

But calm, my soul ! we promised true ; her destined work our land shall do.
Thought, courage, patience will prevail ; we shall not fail ! we shall not fail !" [1]

But the murmurs did not come from one wing of the party alone. It may be confidently stated that O'Connell's course at this critical moment did not satisfy any considerable section of his supporters. Those who were of opinion that it was the height of prudence to give way before superior force found it difficult to justify a policy which led him into a position when abject submission was the only alternative to hopeless resistance. And some of the most absolute devotees of peace were dissatisfied that the right of meeting to petition Parliament was abandoned before a Castle proclamation, without any legal resistance. He ought, they insisted, to have tried the question by going to the field with a moderate attendance, and, if he was interrupted, bringing an action for assault: a curious anti-climax to monster meetings and Mallow defiances; but there were those who thought that this device was "the last shred of the constitution."

The Executive was spurred on to improve their victory by journals which a few weeks before had been foreshadowing a compromise with the Repealers. It was not possible, indeed, that the Government could stop where they found themselves; and every hour brought forth new rumours of the measures they had in contemplation. After the delay

[1] *Nation*, October 14, 1843—a week after the suppression of the Clontarf meeting.

of a week—interposed, doubtless, that they might note the effect of the first stroke—a second blow was struck. On Friday the *Evening Mail* announced that a prosecution for conspiracy was about to be instituted, informations against the chief conspirators having been actually sworn, and that the arrests would take place next day. The Government intended—so the inspired journal affirmed—to put down "all Repeal meetings, associations, and committees, and to stop the collection of Repeal rent."[1] The *Warder* next day added that warrants had issued against Archbishop MacHale and Bishop Higgins.

Next morning[2] O'Connell, his son John, his political aides-de-camp, Thomas Matthew Ray, Thomas Steele, and Richard Barrett, and the editors of the leading National journals—John Gray of the *Freeman* and Charles Gavan Duffy of the *Nation*—were required to put in bail. Information had been sworn against them for a conspiracy to excite ill-will among her Majesty's subjects, to weaken their confidence in the administration of justice, and to obtain by unlawful methods a change in the constitution and government of the country; and on a second count for exciting disaffection among her Majesty's troops. But along with these conspicuous offenders there were included, instead of the bishop and archbishop designated for prosecution, two priests of lives so modest that their names first became known to the country in the list of arrests. One was Father Tyrrell, who had been selected at the beginning of the week to propose the Clontarf resolutions on account of his successful exertions to forewarn the people; the other was Father Tierney, a Northern priest, whose share in the popular movement had been limited to attending a county meeting in his own parish, and a single weekly meeting of the Association. Among the gentlemen charged with conspiracy one-half had never seen Father Tyrrell and three-fourths had never heard of Father Tierney. He was known to me from my boyhood, and probably long known to O'Connell; but his life and labours, neither of which were unfruitful, belonged entirely to the local history of the diocese of Clogher, and had not often become the property of the newspapers. It is still believed, and there is nothing in official practices in Ireland, as they existed at that period, which forbids our believing, that the unoffending gentleman was arrested and charged with conspiracy as a punishment for having presumed to hold a monster meeting on the estate

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[1] *Dublin Evening Mail*, Oct. 13, 1843.

[2] Saturday, Oct. 14, 1843.

of Mr Lucas, an Ulster squire, who was at that time Under Secretary in Dublin Castle.

To have brought the Repealers to this pass was described by his adherents as a master-stroke of statesmanship in Peel. But if statesmanship implies a care for to-morrow as well as to-day, Peel committed a mistake as disastrous as O'Connell's. He declared by his language and policy that the wishes of the Irish people would be disregarded, however unanimous they might become; and by that course he taught many of those who had set their hearts on success to rely no further on methods which presupposed the consent of England. He did not surmount, he merely postponed the difficulty. The abortive insurrection of '48, and the Fenian conspiracy which followed nearly twenty years later, were stimulated by a national pride wounded and humbled in 1843. The submission of England in the Alabama arbitration, nearly a quarter of a century after the Clontarf meeting, was another of its remote consequences; for it was in effect a precaution against the wrath of Irishmen in America. But it is probable that the chief of a Conservative Government could not resist the strong pressure of his colleagues and supporters. The renowned soldier associated with him in office was impatient of the delay which had already taken place, and looked forward, it seems, with grim enjoyment to the sport of shelling his fellow-countrymen. "To cannonade the mob" was, in his opinion, the one thing needful.[1]

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[1] "When we were assembled in the drawing-room before dinner the Duke entered, with the proclamation issued at Dublin Castle, to repress the Repeal meeting at Clontarf, which he had just received from town by express. He seemed very much elated, and putting on his spectacles, read the whole proclamation out loud from beginning to end, laying great stress on the words 'tending to overthrow the Constitution of the British Empire as by law established.' I could see that he was much pleased with this exercise of authority, and that he thought the Government had been dilatory in not adopting these strong measures at an earlier period. He said, 'We must now show them we are really in earnest; there must be no paltering or truckling with O'Connell; and as we are well prepared for every emergency, I have no fears for the result. Ten years of misrule in Ireland have rendered our task more difficult, but we must now bring the rascals on their knees; they give us now a fair pretext to put them down, as their late placard invites the mob to assemble in military order, and their horsemen to form in troops. This order probably was not written by O'Connell himself, but by some eager zealots of his party, who has thus brought the affair to a crisis. Our proclamation is well drawn up, and avails itself of the unguarded opening which O'Connell has given us to set him at defiance.' He then turned to me and said—'Do you know that the Pope's nuncio, Gravina, said at Lisbon at the time of the insurrection—

'Pour la canaille,
Faut la mitraille!'

As he went in to dinner he repeated the couplet two or three times."—"Raikes's Diary."

The prosecution, like every previous attack on the national movement, was followed by a large accession to its ranks. Among the earliest recruits on this occasion was Frederick Lucas, the man of subtlest intellect save one, and of the most practical ability without any exception, among the English converts to Catholicity. He resisted Repeal at the beginning, but he had educated himself out of his national prejudices, and said so without hesitation. Another was the Catholic Archbishop of Cashel, who had hitherto held aloof from all political movements. But the Protestant recruits attracted more attention. Among them was Caleb Powell, member for the county of Limerick, one of the Whig gentry who at the general election had staked their seats upon refusing any concession on the question; John Lloyd Fitzgerald, who inherited the principles as well as the blood of the Geraldines; and William Smith O'Brien.

It is scarcely possible now, when his name has been soiled by failure and by persistent disparagement, to estimate justly the effect of Mr Smith O'Brien's conversion on the public mind. His family were by birth and possessions amongst the most distinguished of the Protestant gentry; they had formerly, and have since, been ennobled by the Crown; he had lived and been educated amongst Englishmen of his own rank, and after twenty years of parliamentary experience he had won a prominent place among the small body of Irish Whigs whom it was the policy of English Ministers to court. Had he desired office it is certain that office was within his reach. His abilities, which were carefully cultivated, have been pronounced by no prejudiced critic to be "far from inconsiderable,"[1] and they rested on the foundation of a moral nature as solid as has often been given to man. To the Celtic imagination the new recruit was an historical personage, the representative of a house which for twenty generations had ruled territories, conducted negotiations, and marshalled armies, and the lineal heir of a king still familiar to the memory of the nation after eight hundred years. But in truth he was something of far higher value to them than this. He was the incarnation of public duty. At forty years of age, with tastes, opinions, and friendships unchangeably formed, he separated himself from the associates of a lifetime, to join a party in their day of humiliation—many of whom offended his taste and some of whom alarmed his judgment—because he believed that in joining them he followed the path of duty. From his English education he derived manners which his countrymen regarded as cold, but they covered a

[1] Disraeli's "Life of Lord George Bentinck."

firmness of purpose and a fidelity in friendship not always found in men of more expansive nature. He never attained to popular eloquence, but it was an impressive and hopeful spectacle in later times to see an Irish audience listening with eager interest to his measured, and sometimes stilted, language on the public platform; because they had come to understand that it represented his opinions and intentions with exact accuracy. Of the gifts which he brought to the national cause, the most important was his example; an example of statements always corresponding with the facts, and promises strictly performed.

O'Brien began immediately to take an active part in the business of the Association. O'Connell treated him with studied courtesy and even deference, but there was a fundamental difference in the characters of the men which it was impossible to disguise. The most pressing business of the time was to provide against the possibility of any popular disturbance, and each applied himself to this task according to his nature. O'Connell exhorted the people, whatever might be the result of the State trial, to violate no law; they must not even hold a public meeting till the trial was over, except to petition the Queen or Parliament. To sweeten this unpalatable counsel he had recourse to one of the prodigious exaggerations which weakened his influence with reasonable men and have tarnished his memory.

If the people would follow his advice in these respects, he declared, he could promise them the period was not distant when the Queen would open the Irish Parliament. His doctrine was that important political institutions, to be valuable, must be obtained by peaceable means. Give him but six months of perfect peace and he would offer his head on the block if at the end of that time there was not a Parliament in College Green.[1]

O'Brien strongly seconded O'Connell's exhortation to peace and forbearance, but he was not sanguine of winning Repeal in any given time that could be specified beforehand. By keeping the organisation strong, and keeping it within the law, all classes would gravitate towards it, and then they would succeed. But as long as the Protestant population and the landed proprietors were hostile, though the Association might harass the Government and extort one by one unwilling concessions, it could not expect to obtain an Irish Parliament. Many circumstances might retard it, but the slightest approach to violence would be fatal, by throwing into the ranks of the Government all who were anxious for peace and tranquillity. Upon the

[1] Meeting of St Andrew's, reported in *Nation* of October 28, 1843.

specific points where the Government had assailed the Association, he was deliberately of opinion that the Association had been within the law. They were entitled to meet in any number for the purpose of petitioning Parliament, and entitled to submit their differences to arbitrators, and he was ready to test these rights in his own person, if it were thought desirable, by holding a county meeting or by acting as an arbitrator.[1]

Though this policy was not adopted, it was regarded as worthy of the national dignity, and such as O'Connell would have followed in his vigorous manhood; and it greatly endeared O'Brien to the people. It was in truth a constitutional policy in its highest sense —as Eliot and Hampden understood it; a policy which obeyed the law, but required the law to be declared by competent authority whenever it was in doubt, and refused to permit the Crown or its agents to violate it.

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[1] Speech at Newcastle Dinner, November 1843.

END OF VOL. I.

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YOUNG IRELAND.

READING "THE NATION."

(From an oil painting by HENRY MCMANUS, R.H.A.)

YOUNG IRELAND

A Fragment of Irish History

1840-45

FINAL REVISION

ILLUSTRATED

BY

THE HON. SIR CHARLES GAVAN DUFFY
K.C.M.G.

VOLUME II

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BOOK II.

YOUNG IRELAND.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

HOW O'CONNELL AND THE TRAVERSERS WERE TRIED.

THE scene changes from exulting musters and processions of the people to the grave procedure and dilatory processes of a court of law; but there was no falling off in interest, and the incidents are certainly not less instructive to the political student than those already passed in review. The bulk of the nation were disappointed and puzzled, but not alienated, by the change of policy; and they turned with unabated solicitude to the new contest between their veteran tribune and his opponents. Throughout Europe and America the prosecution was watched with mingled interest and wonder. It was regarded, at first, as an attempt to punish a renowned Irishman, by the agency of an Irish court and an Irish jury, for having striven to raise his country in the scale of nations; an attempt which foreigners might well deem maladroit and hopeless. But after a little, when the nature of the agencies relied on for success became better understood, there was a new issue raised—the system of government and jurisprudence established in Ireland was placed on its trial before mankind. It will repay those who desire to understand a system by which Irishmen of moderate temper were made rebels, and thoughtful men in foreign countries made sympathisers with rebels, to study the incidents of this memorable trial.

The suppression of the Clontarf meeting was a humiliation to O'Connell, but it is probable that his arrest was a relief. It transferred the contest to a field where he was at home and a master. He was confessedly the greatest advocate of his day; the practice of criminal courts, the method and machinery of State prosecutions, and the

devices by which verdicts are obtained or evaded, were all familiar to him. But he did not rely solely on his own resources. He retained the foremost men at the Bar, and engaged the attorneys most skilful and experienced in *Nisi Prius* courts. Two counsel and an attorney were assigned to each of the traversers (as the gentlemen charged with conspiracy came to be called after they had traversed the indictment), and these counsel included Mr Pigot, afterwards Chief Baron; Mr Monahan, afterwards Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; Mr Moore, between whom and the Great Seal of Ireland only an accident intervened; Mr Whiteside, afterwards Lord Chief Justice; Mr Jonathan Henn, reputed to be a lawyer of wider and riper knowledge than any of these eminent men, but who loved the sport of Isaac Walton better than angling for preferment; Richard Sheil, the most accomplished rhetorician in the House of Commons, and a number of juniors, among whom were Mr O'Hagan, afterwards Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and Sir Colman O'Loghlen, afterwards Judge Advocate General in England. The agents were men of as much note in their own profession. Pierce Mahony, sometimes called the Prince of Attorneys, who twelve years before had organised the Leinster Declaration against Repeal, and given a heavy blow to the movement in 1833; William Ford, noted for having advocated the desperate device of "exclusive dealing" in the Catholic Association; Peter M'Evoy Gartlan, and John M'Namara Cantwell, were names of significance in Ireland; and Thomas Reilly, who was less widely known, was destined a little later to give a remarkable recruit to the national cause in the person of his son, Thomas Devin Reilly. The skill and pertinacity of these well-trained litigants of the shorter robe made them invaluable in such a contest. Barry suggested that they should be called the "Traversers' Brass Band," and the title not merely stuck, but has since been borrowed and employed with less success by Mr Punch.

The Crown was also represented by men on the highroad to the bench. The Attorney-General, Mr T. B. C. Smith, afterwards Master of the Rolls, was son of a remarkable Irish judge who left a reputation for eccentric ability, indolence worthy of a lotus-eater, and a partisanship abnormal even in his class and day. Mr Smith was a well-informed lawyer, with an active intellect sometimes disturbed by sudden fits of irritability, less attributable to a bad disposition than to a bad digestion. But passions ran too high to make such an allowance, and on his first outbreak of temper O'Connell took occasion to remark that his disposition towards the Traversers was probably not sweetened by the recollection that his father was

censured by Parliament on the motion of the Traverser Daniel O'Connell, and he himself defeated at Athlone by the Traverser John O'Connell. Surrounded by the trappings and formalities of a court of law where he was much at home, Mr Smith had a certain prim dignity; but he was so meagre, unwholesome, and ghastly that elsewhere he looked like an owl in the sunshine. The Solicitor-General, Richard Wilson Greene, afterwards a Baron of the Exchequer, was a lawyer of greater ability and resources, but subject also to fits of morbid and eccentric humour. The other counsel for the Crown included Mr Brewster and Mr Napier, each of whom reached the office of Lord Chancellor, half a dozen men selected from the Tory Bar for professional or political reasons, and Robert Holmes, whom men wondered to find in such society.[1] Mr Holmes was brother-in-law of Robert Emmet, who has left an historic name as a martyr for Irish liberty; and he had been imprisoned in early manhood as a sympathiser with that generous enthusiast. This imprisonment was said to be so strict that it was only on his release he learned the tragic fate of his friend. Mr Holmes's writings against the Union were still quoted for their fierceness and pungency; and he had retained so much of his early opinions as induced him to refuse promotion from the Irish Government whatever men were in power. He still wore a stuff gown after nearly half a century of practice, and when he had become in effect leader of his circuit and Father of the Irish Bar. With two of the Traversers his personal relations were such as gave an unpleasant aspect to his appearance among the prosecuting counsel. O'Connell, who was habitually unjust to the men of '98, flung at them the absurd epithet of "miscreants." They were miscreant of English authority in Ireland, but there is no group of men in history to whom the reproach, in its vulgar sense, was less applicable. After they had become political exiles they rose to eminence in the Old and New worlds in arms, arts, science, and the liberal professions. Mr Holmes resented this

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[1] The counsel for the Crown, in addition to those named above, were Mr Sergeant Warren, Mr Bennett, Q.C.; Mr Freeman, Q.C.; Mr Martley, Q.C.; Mr Tomb, Q.C.; Mr Smily, and Mr Baker. The agent was Mr Kemmis, Crown Solicitor. It was noted as a strange fact that the young barrister who had encountered O'Connell in the Corporation debate was not entrusted with a brief by the Government. When in later times Attorney-General Smith became Master of the Rolls the junior bar had a bad time with the dyspeptic Judge. One of them quoted a couplet from Goldsmith's description of the pedagogue in the "Deserted Village" to paint their daily experience in the Rolls:—

> "Full well each boding trembling learned to trace
> The day's disasters in his morning face."

injustice, and there had been frequent and fierce encounters between him and O'Connell at the Bar. Mr Barrett, who considered it his *rôle* to embrace and exaggerate his patron's quarrels, had assailed Mr Holmes in the *Pilot* with scurrility so offensive that the old man, half a dozen years before the date now reached, had sent him a challenge. Knowing nothing of Mr Barrett, he said he had enquired whether he was a gentleman, and finding him gentleman enough for his purpose, he called upon him to become responsible for his foul language. Mr Barrett replied that he was under recognisance to keep the peace, arising out of a conviction for seditious libel. Mr Holmes, who was not to be baulked by such an impediment, offered to lodge the amount of the penalty with trustees for the "benefit of the gentleman's heirs or creditors." Mr Barrett, however, did not choose to fight, even on those liberal terms, and the incident had long made sport for the Dublin newspapers. Even Repealers could not refrain from so tempting a theme. "We're a very peaceful party," Morgan John, the most jovial of the second generation of O'Connells, used to say; "Uncle Dan has registered a vow in Heaven not to shed blood, and Dick Barrett another vow in the Head Police Office." It is proper to note that Mr Holmes was in a measure bound by the rules of his profession to accept the retainer sent to him by the Crown, and that he did not exhibit the least animus against the defendants in the course of the proceedings.

The question first mooted among all classes was, Would there be a fair trial? A fair trial in a political case was a phenomenon which in Ireland had not been seen in the memory of living man. In State prosecutions the law was wrested to the interest of the Crown as systematically in the reign of Queen Victoria in Ireland as it had been wrested in the reign of Charles I. in England. The jury panels and the jury itself, it was feared, would be as carefully packed for a conviction as panels and jurors had been packed in Middlesex under the Stuarts. And this fear was not confined to ignorant or prejudiced persons. Lord Cloncurry, a Privy Councillor, publicly declared that up to the time of O'Loghlen and Perrin an impartial and unpacked jury in Crown cases where Catholics were concerned was a thing quite unknown. And "the time of O'Loghlen and Perrin" was distant just half a dozen years. Mr Henry Grattan revived in the public memory the fact that when Lord Fingal was arrested, and the Catholic delegates tried in 1811, the jury panel

produced by Mr Kemmis, the Crown Solicitor, was proved to have found its way out of the pocket of Sir Charles Saxton, the Under Secretary, in Dublin Castle. Mr Kemmis's son was now Crown Solicitor, and the Sheriff's office was still in the hands of persons bred in the practice of empaneling accommodating juries. In Dublin the Sheriff himself was appointed by the Crown; in London he was appointed by the Corporation, and so he had been appointed in Dublin while the Corporation was an Orange lodge; but when it was opened to the whole community the power was taken away. It was much feared that these well-disciplined officials would decide the State prosecution before a witness was examined or an indictment found. There was no doubt a probability that a Minister so cautious and circumspect as Sir Robert Peel would permit nothing very gross to be done; but on this slender foundation rested the whole chance of a fair trial.

On the second of November the indictment was sent to the Grand Jury; but it was only found a true bill after five days' deliberation. One cause of delay was its inordinate length, for which there was no precedent in that museum of obsolete instruments of torture—the State Trials.

The printed indictment handed to the Court was nearly a hundred yards long. When it was made up into a book it covered fifty-seven folio pages, like the pages of the *Times*. In this huge document there were forty-three overt acts set out; sixteen of which consisted merely of attendance at monster meetings. It was charged against the three journalists, as part of the conspiracy, that they reported the speeches made at these meetings. Fifteen other overt acts consisted in attending the ordinary meetings of the Repeal Association, where speeches of O'Connell's, alleged to be seditious, were delivered, and the plan of the Arbitration Courts adopted; and, as respects the three journalists, in "unlawfully, maliciously, and seditiously" reporting these transactions in their newspapers. Another overt act was the "endeavour to collect a meeting" at Clontarf. Ten of the eleven remaining overt acts were charged against the newspapers. Mr Barrett had published in the *Pilot* a letter from a Catholic clergyman on the "Duty of a Soldier," and an article on the "Irish in the English Army," which with certain speeches of O'Connell's on the absence of promotion from the ranks, and an article in the *Nation* on the "Morality of War," were the evidence relied upon to establish the charge of endeavouring to cause dissatisfaction among her Majesty's troops.

Six other overt acts were publications in the *Nation;* four of them consisting of leading articles, one a poem,[1] and another a letter proposing that the modern names of places in Ireland should be abandoned, and the old Celtic names revived. And, finally, there was a general charge that all the conspirators did on divers days, and in divers places, seek to carry out their conspiracy by the not altogether unprecedented method of holding meetings, collecting money, making speeches, and adopting resolutions.[2]

The best skill of the Crown lawyers had been devoted to frame an impregnable indictment, and the contest over this important instrument was the most stubborn and decisive in the trial.

It was distributed into eleven counts, in each of which all the defendants were charged with having unlawfully, maliciously, and seditiously combined, conspired, and confederated with each other, and with divers other persons unknown, for the purpose of committing the offences imputed to them. The first count charged a conspiracy to raise discontent among Her Majesty's subjects, and to incite seditious opposition to the Government; to stir up ill-will between Her Majesty's subjects, especially between Irishmen and Englishmen; to excite disaffection in the army; to assemble large meetings for the purpose of intimidation; and to bring into hatred and contempt the Courts of Law. The ten other counts varied these charges for the purpose of bringing them with more certainty within the rules of criminal pleading. The aim of the preliminary documents called pleadings in an action or trial is to determine a simple intelligible issue to be sent to the jury; but this stupendous document raised so many separate issues that to answer it, or even to understand it, was difficult. The Lord Chief-Justice of England afterwards described in memorable language the confusion it was calculated to create.

"The pleaders who drew this indictment," he said, "may mean one thing. the judge another, the jury a third, and the jury if asked whether the party was guilty in the only sense in which the law would condemn him might in that sense have acquitted him, whilst a fourth sense might perhaps be discovered by the Court of Error for these ambiguous phrases."

When the indictment was published the first feeling was one of profound surprise. The Attorney-General, before the bill was found, had

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[1] "The Memory of the Dead."—See "Spirit of the Nation." The prosecution drew attention to a poem whose rare merits when they became known won it a reputation which, after more than half a century, is still fresh and universal. The author was John K. Ingram, a student of Trinity College, Dublin, then a youth under age, who has since risen through the offices and dignities of his university to become Senior Fellow and an accomplished man of letters.

[2] The attendance at the monster meetings was set out in the indictment, meeting by meeting, and the whole number exceeded three millions and a half. A movement of the people so profound and universal, had it occurred in England, would be sufficient not merely to re-adjust the legislative machinery of the State but to change the dynasty. If in Ireland it was to be answered only by a State prosecution, what, then, was Ireland? Edmund Burke, speaking of the American Colonies, had answered the question. "The Government against which a claim of liberty is tantamount to high treason, is a Government to which submission is equivalent to slavery."

declared that he was prepared to disclose "as wicked and foul a conspiracy as ever disturbed an Empire," and here was nothing to be disclosed; nothing which had not been done in public places without any design or desire of concealment. If the Traversers had been guilty of an overt act of conspiracy in attending monster meetings or meetings of the Repeal Association, it was an offence which the whole community shared. The meetings were open to everyone, and almost everyone had attended some of them. If the journalists were guilty of overt acts of conspiracy in reporting the meetings, it was a common offence, for they were reported by every journal in the island, Tory, Whig, or National. It was felt to be very probable that some of the defendants in speeches or writing had violated the strict law of seditious libel. Whether they had not usurped the prerogative of the Crown in establishing Arbitration Courts was a question of law which it would be rash to prejudge. But there was a belief nearly universal that no conspiracy existed or could be proved. And in truth no conspiracy did exist, in law or in fact, between the persons charged with this offence in the indictment. Some of them literally did not know each other; some of them existed in a still completer state of alienation, for they had ceased to know each other; some would probably not have conspired under any circumstances, conspiracy being a dangerous recreation; and others would certainly never have conspired, combined, or confederated for any serious purpose, with certain of the persons whom the law officers associated with them in the bill of indictment.

The public were puzzled to understand why so improbable an offence was charged, till they learned that it enabled the Crown to make the defendants responsible for each other's acts—to make O'Connell responsible for newspaper articles and correspondence which he may never have read; to make others responsible for his speeches which they certainly had never heard delivered; to make Mr Tierney responsible for transactions which had happened eight months before he took part in the movement, and Mr Barrett for the proceedings of an Association of which it was ultimately discovered he had never become a member. An indictment for conspiracy is a peculiarly ingenious instrument of destruction: it is not necessary for the Crown to prove that an agreement was entered into at any time or place; the jury are at liberty to infer its existence from subsequent transactions; and for the accused to prove that such an agreement never took place is, of course, impossible. The method had another important consequence. Had the Crown prosecuted any of the monster meetings as an unlawful

assembly, the question of its legality must be tried in the county where the meeting took place, by men necessarily familiar with its character; but by charging a number of the meetings as overt acts in a conspiracy, the question might be remitted to a jury of Castle tradesmen who had never seen a monster meeting. "Criminal Justice," a Tory writer exultingly declared, "had formerly fished with a hook, but she now fished with a net."[1]

She had no longer, however, the advantage of fishing in muddy waters; whatever was done in this case must be done under a flood of penetrating light. It is difficult to doubt that Sir Robert Peel was possessed by the desire attributed to him, that a decent fairness and moderation might be observed, but he had to act through agents trained in a widely different policy. The importance of the case and the constitutional prudence of the head of the Government exercised some restraining influence, but men do not easily put off the habits of a lifetime, and enough of the original spirit remained to enable a philosophical observer to estimate the character of State prosecutions in Ireland in cases which were protected by their obscurity.

At the outset the traversers' counsel applied for a list of witnesses examined before the Grand Jury, some or all of whom must also be examined on the trial. The veracity and character of witnesses are circumstances upon which the weight of their testimony depend. Witnesses called to prove important facts might be persons unworthy of credit, or who had forfeited all character in their own districts by evil lives, or who were notoriously absent from the transactions they pretended to describe. But how was this to be proved if the traversers heard their names for the first time when they were produced in the witness box? In England the practice, in all indictments for conspiracy, is to furnish the list as a matter of course. In the then recent Chartist trials it had been furnished; the Traversers' counsel demanded whether the same thing could be refused in Ireland. The Crown lawyers were of opinion that it could and ought to be refused. Admitting the English practice, they contended that a contrary practice prevailed in Ireland. The humane and liberal policy of later legislation, which extended the privileges of the accused and narrowed the harsh prerogative of the Crown, was still, they declared, unknown in the Four Courts, and it was now to be judicially determined whether an Irishman charged with conspiracy in Dublin should enjoy the same safeguards as

[1] *Quarterly Review*, Dec. 1844.

an Englishman tried for the same offence in Westminster. When the Court delivered judgment Mr Justice Perrin was of opinion that there ought to be an uniform practice throughout the United Kingdom; but the majority of the Court ruled otherwise. The judgment of the Chief-Justice reads like one of the amenities of Jeffreys to the State prisoners of James II. "Their defence," he said, "if any defence they have, does not depend on the names of the witnesses, but the nature of the charge. . . . The defendants would not be a whit benefited by knowing whether the names of the witnesses are A B or C D." And so it was determined, literally in the face of Europe, that there should be one law for political offences in England and another in Ireland.[1]

On the 21st of November the Traversers pleaded, and it became necessary to fix a day for the trial. Their counsel read a joint affidavit from the solicitors, asking for a delay on account of the unprecedented body of evidence which they had to collect or digest. The indictment charged a long roll of overt acts occurring in widely separated districts, and extending over a period of nine months; and it appeared by the "bill of particulars" that all the speeches, resolutions, and documents, and all the acts done at the several meetings, as well as the entire contents of thirty-four numbers of the *Pilot*, thirty-nine numbers of the *Nation*, and forty-one numbers of the *Freeman's Journal*, would be made evidence. With such a vast variety of facts to be inquired into, if they were limited to the time ordinarily allowed to prepare a defence, it would amount to a manifest denial of justice. In order that they might have two months to perform their arduous duty, they asked that the trial should not take place earlier than the 1st of February.

The Attorney-General did not consider that these facts justified delay; the Traversers, who were themselves present at the meetings or reported them in their newspapers, must necessarily be familiar with all the circumstances, and could not suffer by a speedy trial. The rejoinder was complete. There were some of the Traversers who were not present at a single monster meeting, others who were present at only one or two, some of them owned no newspaper; and it was certain that not one of the eight Traversers had read the whole of the hundred and twenty-four newspapers for which it was proposed to hold them responsible. To become acquainted with so vast a body of facts in a

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[1] The names never were disclosed till after the verdict, and then it was discovered that twenty-three witnesses had been produced before the Grand Jury, of whom only nine were subsequently examined at the trial and subjected to the test of cross-examination.

few days was manifestly impossible. This argument, however, did not prevail with the Court or the Crown. But there was another ground taken up by counsel from which it proved to be impossible to dislodge them. The Crown was about to move for a special jury (that is, for a jury of a class over which the Crown has most influence), and the special jury list was at that moment undergoing the ordinary annual revision before the Recorder, and would not be in legal operation before January. An affidavit was read from Mr Mahony, which let in a flood of light on the art of panel making as practised under sheriffs appointed by the old Corporation or the Crown. He had applied at the sheriff's office for a copy of the general jurors' book, and a list of the special jurors for the current year; but both applications were refused. As a last resource he went to the office of the Clerk of the Peace and inspected the returns made by the collectors of Grand Jury Cess from which the General Jury List is made up. Upwards of eleven thousand houses in Dublin were rated at the amount which qualified the owner to be on the jury list, but the list of persons liable to serve, furnished by the collectors, amounted to less than five thousand; and among the five thousand there were more than four hundred whose Christian names, by which alone they could be identified and summoned, were omitted. The latest Special Jury List open to inspection disclosed more alarming discrepancies. It was supposed to contain the names of all persons in the city of Dublin qualified to serve as special jurors. Peers, baronets, and their eldest sons, persons entitled to the style of esquire, all wholesale traders, and retail traders worth five thousand pounds, were entitled to be placed on the list. But it contained only three hundred and eighty-eight names in all, and of this small number upwards of seventy were disqualified or incapable of serving; some being dead, some disabled by bodily infirmity or non-residence, and the remainder excluded by statute as city magistrates or members of the Corporation. The omissions were not accidental, but systematic. Of the three hundred and eighty-eight, only fifty-three, or less than one in seven, were Catholics. And these fifty-three were further diminished by the circumstance that thirty of them were among the seventy who were disqualified. Out of the three hundred and thirty-three Protestants forty were disqualified, or only one in eight; out of fifty-three Catholics thirty were disqualified, or more than one in two, leaving only twenty-three persons professing the Catholic religion on the special jury list for the Catholic city of Dublin. Mr Mahony was able to affirm, from an experience of more than a quarter of a

century in the practice of his profession, that instead of twenty-three there were at least three hundred Catholics in Dublin entitled to act as special jurors. It is highly probable from the current of their decisions that the Court would have held these facts to be quite irrelevant, and gravely pronounced the list to be unexceptionable; but there were other facts which could not be conveniently ignored. A few days before, the Recorder, in the process of revising the list for the coming year, took occasion to state that he had complained to successive sheriffs of its imperfect condition, and that he now hoped, with the aid of counsel and agents (who attended for the purpose on behalf of the Traversers), to be able to form for the first time a full and fair jurors' book. The Recorder in question was Mr Frederick Shaw, member for Dublin University, and one of the Privy Councillors who had signed the proclamation against the Clontarf meeting. Mr Shaw was a Parliamentary personage of considerable importance, and at this time was becoming somewhat discontented with Peel, of whom he had been an efficient supporter. In the face of his admission, which he might feel it his duty to repeat in the House of Commons, it would have been perilous to proceed; and the law officers said that after what had fallen from so eminent a judge they would consent to a delay. They proposed to fix the trial not for the 1st of February, but for the first Monday of the ensuing term, the 15th of January, the date at which the new jurors' book would come into operation.

The jurors' book, such as it was discovered to be in 1843, probably contained a larger proportion of Catholics than had been placed upon it at any time since the Revolution of 1688, and for five generations the property, liberty, and lives of Irish Catholics had been made the sport of a permanent conspiracy of Crown officials, acting with the audacity which long impunity creates. In recent times it was known that a small knot of broken-down citizens of safe politics were enabled to live by the trade of being special jurors. They were always in court their confederates in the Sheriff's Office and the Crown offices knew they were to be relied upon, and they went into the jurors' room to earn the fee paid in such cases with as much regularity as the sheriff's bailiffs took their place outside the door. This was the highest court of criminal jurisdiction in the kingdom, and the most scrupulous in its procedure; in the utter darkness of a petty sessions, where the naked peasant had often to face an angry master sitting as his judge, only a morbid imagination can picture the horrors sometimes transacted. Yet English

statesmen and publicists have found it difficult to understand why the law was not trusted or venerated in Ireland.

The revision of the jury list now became the point of public interest, and the Recorder gave it assiduous attention. The rate-collectors' books supplied the names of all rate-paying citizens, and with care and patience the full and fair jurors' book which he proposed to frame seemed at length likely to be attained. But the officials of the Sheriff's Office, who had stuffed panels and packed juries for a lifetime, were not easily baffled. The special jury list was indeed increased from 388 to 717 names,[1] but they had executed a manœuvre equivalent to picking the best trump out of a pack of cards. It was this transaction, to be presently detailed, which Lord Denman afterwards described as one which rendered trial by jury in Ireland "a mockery, a delusion, and a snare."

On the 3rd of January the agents in the case, accompanied by counsel, attended before the Clerk of the Crown to strike the special jury which was to be sworn a fortnight later. Sharp practice was still the order of the day. The Attorney-General had issued summonses for this meeting before the special jury list was in legal existence, and since it had come into existence the Sheriff had refused a copy of it to the Traversers. The statute under which they were proceeding gave each party the right to make certain objections to jurors; the Crown had the list and would be prepared with objections, but how could the Traversers be prepared, if they did not know the names? Hitherto the uniform practice had been to furnish the list; the practice was so unbroken that it assumed the strength and character of law. They therefore demanded a copy and a postponement for a few days in order to scrutinise it. The Clerk of the Crown, who is the presiding officer on these occasions, remarked that there was no affidavit, and in the absence of legal proof that the Sheriff had refused the list he could not entertain the application for postponement. The agent for the Traversers replied that the Sheriff was then present in the room, and might, without inordinate inconvenience be asked whether he had not refused. But this was an expedient so informal that the official gentleman would not condescend to have recourse to it. Counsel, however, succeeded in extracting from the Sheriff an admission that the list had been refused, and a postponement till twelve o'clock next day was at length recorded, that the Traversers might be enabled to

[1] A more careful revision in later times raised the number to 1100.

exercise the right conferred on them by law of objecting to persons to whom a legal objection existed.

But the gentlemen of the Sheriff's office were not at the end of their resources. No copy of the list was ready; but they were willing to read it aloud and allow the agents—the attendance of their clerks being forbidden—to copy the names with their own hands. Could anything be fairer or more obliging? Copying the names, addresses, and additions of seven hundred and seventeen persons, to be written by gentlemen long unaccustomed to that class of manual labour, occupied till half-past eight o'clock at night; and as the jury was to be struck at twelve o'clock next morning, the Traversers were welcome to such scrutiny as they could accomplish in the interval.

When the parties met at noon next day, Mr Whiteside, with a grave and decorous reserve very trying to the temper of those who knew the facts which had been discovered in the interval, complained that, by some quite unaccountable mistake, the names of sixty persons who had been adjudicated on by the Recorder and duly entered on the Common Jury-book as special jurors were altogether omitted from the list from which it was now proposed to strike the jury. Among those omitted were some of the most eminent, wealthy, and respectable men in the community. Nearly one-tenth of the special jurors of the city were dropped out, and he submitted that the officer could not proceed to strike a jury from so defective a panel. These facts he proposed to establish by calling on the Clerk of the Crown to produce the Common Jurors' book, where the names omitted from the special jury list would be found recorded. Mr Brewster, who was afterwards acclimatised in the mild region of Conservatism as a Peelite, was at this time a fierce and even truculent Tory, who had only recently emerged from the boisterous contests of a criminal court. On behalf of the Crown he flatly objected to the book being produced or referred to; their business was to strike a jury, and to striking a jury they must confine themselves. Mr Ford, who was in attendance as solicitor for O'Connell, grew impatient at this fencing with foils. He exclaimed vehemently that there had been "an infamous tampering with the list;" the names of many of the best known Catholic gentlemen in the city had been illegally suppressed; and he protested against using the panel under such shameful circumstances. The Clerk of the Crown, who had lived all his life in the atmosphere of Protestant ascendancy, in the jury-box as well as in the State, and who was accustomed to the vulgar discontent of the majority, overruled this objection and gravely pro-

ceeded to strike the jury from the mutilated list. And so the first stage of this great trial commenced under an angry sense of foul play, which speedily spread from the Crown Office to the city, and from the city to the whole country. If English government in Ireland was on its trial before the great international court of public opinion the evidence was becoming critical.

Striking a special jury, according to the system which then prevailed, was a mixed game of chance and skill. As many cards as there were names on the jurors' list were put into a ballot box, where they were, or ought to be, well shaken; then forty-eight cards were drawn out and the names on the jury list corresponding with the numbers on the cards so drawn constituted the panel. The forty-eight names on the panel were reduced one-half by each party striking off any twelve they thought proper; and of the two dozen who remained the twelve who first answer to their names in court on the day of trial must be sworn on the jury. Experienced players are said to have great advantages over novices in the method of placing the cards in the box, and in the method of drawing them out of the box, but these are mysteries on which the uninitiated speculate in vain.

Upon the present occasion there were eleven Catholics among the forty-eight jurors drawn. The practice is for the attorney on each side to strike off a name in his turn. Mr Kemmis on behalf of the Crown struck off one after another, as the opportunity arose, every Catholic on the list. He had often done so before in administering what was called justice in Ireland, but the business was no longer transacted in silence and darkness. Each exercise of his power was followed by a bitter commentary from Mr Cantwell. "There goes the first Papist," he cried; "another Catholic," and "another" till the work was completed. Next morning it was known throughout the United Kingdom, and speedily known over Europe and America, that the most eminent Catholic in the Empire, a man whose name was familiar to every educated Catholic in the world, was about to be placed upon his trial in the Catholic metropolis of a Catholic country, before four judges and twelve jurors among whom there was not a single Catholic. The effect which this transaction produced on the public mind in Ireland may be compared to the effect produced in England by some of the most offensive aggressions of James II. Yet James never tried a Protestant gentleman in Middlesex before a bench and a jury composed exclusively of Catholics. The seven bishops were tried before a Protestant jury, which in England was putting them on their country,

but the English Government, a century and a half later, dared not put O'Connell on the country in Ireland.

Jury-packing was not new, but so gross an application of the practice to a victim so distinguished wounded the national pride as keenly as if it were new. An aggregate meeting of Catholics was immediately summoned to address the Crown on the subject of this "insult and wrong" inflicted on the "emancipated Catholics" by direction of the Queen's Ministers. The requisition was signed by a number of gentlemen who never were Repealers, but steady partisans of the Whigs before and since this transaction. Names like William Murphy of Smithfield, D. R. Pigot, Dominic Corrigan, Matthew Corbally, Francis Codd, John Ball, Thomas Galway, and Walter Sweetman, were not smirched by contact with popular agitations;[1] and still less other names destined, four years later, when the Whig Government were prosecuting another batch of Irish Nationalists, to have their sincerity submitted to a sharp test. One may still read appended to the requisition against jury-packing the names of James Henry Monahan, Attorney-General during the State prosecutions of 1848; James O'Brien, one of the Crown Counsel, aiding him on that occasion; and Thomas Redington, Under Secretary for Ireland, as well as the names of Richard Sheil and Thomas Wyse, who held office out of Ireland during the same memorable period.

At the aggregate meeting some of the most eminent of the requisitionists declared that the exclusion of Catholics from the jury was an intolerable wrong, and that the previous omissions of Catholics from the special jury list afforded grounds for suspicion that foul dealing had been practised. By this time it was ascertained that the number of Catholics omitted amounted to thirty, being more than the entire number on the list before it was revised. On the new list as it now stood, the names of Catholics were about one-fourth; of the names improperly omitted there were more than one-half. All the great towns followed the example of Dublin, and a little later the English Catholics addressed the Queen on the subject. The English Catholics were not Repealers, and were reputed to be but lukewarm in their sympathy with Irish interests; but their pride as a class and their sense

[1] English readers will need to be told that Mr Pigot afterwards became Chief Baron, Dr Corrigan became a baronet, a member of Parliament, and President of the College of Physicians in Ireland; and Mr Ball became Under Secretary for the Colonies, and was better known in later times as President of the Alpine Club, and an accomplished man of letters.

of justice were wounded by this transaction. Many of them were influential by wealth and station, and they had relations with the great Catholic States of Europe, where their complaints would be sure to find an echo. Nine English and Scottish peers and a large number of country gentlemen, among whom the historic names of Talbot, Howard, Vavasour, Weld, Trevelyn, Langdale, and Maxwell were conspicuous, took part in this protest.

While the trial was still in its preliminary stages one of the Traversers, Father Tyrrell, died. His death was attributed to fatigue, endured on the night before the Sunday fixed for the Clontarf meeting. When the news of the proclamation reached him he was in bed; he immediately got on horseback and spent the greater part of a bleak October night in the open air, making arrangements to prevent his parishioners from going to Clontarf. A week later he was arrested for conspiracy, and in a few weeks he was carried to his grave.

CHAPTER II.

HOW THE TRAVERSERS WERE CONVICTED.

When the day appointed for the opening of the State trial arrived,[1] the interest was intense and nearly universal. In the city business seemed to have stopped suddenly like a clock that had run down. From an early hour two living currents set in opposite directions, one towards O'Connell's house in Merrion Square, from which a civic procession accompanied the Traversers, the other to the Four Courts where the trial was to take place. Every warehouse, every office, every workshop, contributed to swell these agitated streams. In the great hall of the Courts it had become necessary to fence the entrance to the Queen's Bench with barriers of solid oak, and here only the Traversers were permitted to pass. The eager crowd of their friends strained against the barrier for the chance of a glance within, or flowed out along the quays on both sides of the river, waiting impatiently for news of a contest, which, instead of yielding any decisive result that day, was about to occupy weeks, and even months, in its languid course. The court was crammed in every part, the precincts of the bench itself were invaded by fashionable toilettes, and the public interest was represented by more reporters than the Press of England and Ireland had ever before sent to a single court.

When the jury list was called over, and the first juror was directed to take the book in his hand, the Traversers' counsel interposed with a challenge to the array. A challenge to the array is a proceeding which calls in question the legal competence of the panel, and prays that it may be quashed. Public opinion had been appealed to with respect to the exclusion of Catholic jurors, but the legal question was now to be tried whether the jurors' book, with so many names abstracted from it, complied with the requirements of the statute regulating juries.

The case of the Traversers was logically complete; there had confessedly been fraud, and fraud would vitiate the judgment of the

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[1] 15th January 1844.

highest court in the realm; *a fortiori* it vitiated the proceedings of the subordinate court of a Recorder. On any theory the panel could not stand: either the Recorder himself caused a fraudulent list to be made out, which beyond controversy would be a fatal objection under the statute; or, as the Traversers believed, some person without his knowledge had made up the list in its defective condition, in which case it was not a list "made up by the Recorder" as the law required. The statute directed him to frame a list containing the names of "all" qualified persons; it was admitted that the existing list did not comply with this direction; and, if the Crown persisted in using the panel framed from it, the Traversers would be denied their right to be tried by a jury constituted according to law.

The Court made up its mind promptly on the demurrer. Judge Perrin was of opinion that the challenge ought to be allowed, as the list had been falsified to the extent of omitting the materials for five entire juries. As respects inconvenience, judges should not regard the consequences of their decision; the inconvenience must be remedied by those whose province it was to make laws. Chief-Justice Pennefather and the majority of the Court, however, overruled the challenge and allowed the demurrer. Names had been omitted by some mistake, but the list still contained seven hundred and seventeen names from which a jury might be fairly selected; a better panel could perhaps have been made, but the omission did not render the proceedings null and void.

During this legal argument it would have been considered highly indecorous to allude to the fact that half of the jurors omitted from the panel were Catholics. The Court would have regarded such a statement as wholly irrelevant, and not a little offensive, and counsel were too discreet to risk it. But in angrier times, which were not far distant, these official proprieties, as we shall see, proved too fragile and artificial a barrier to restrain men contending for their lives and fortunes from uttering the naked truth.

A jury was at length sworn to make a true deliverance between the Crown and the Traversers. It was skilfully selected if the aim was to constitute a tribunal sensitive to the opinion of the propertied classes. It was composed of a half-pay officer, a fashionable gunsmith, four wine merchants, a pianoforte maker, a surveyor, a tanner, a wholesale grocer, a dealer in porcelain, and a retired attorney, who in the end proved useful to the Crown in framing the verdict over which the laym stumbled.

Though there was not one Catholic among the twelve, it was noted that there was one Englishman ; as among the four judges, though there was not one Catholic, there was also one Englishman. Mr Justice Burton had come to Ireland as a clerk to John Philpot Curran before the Union ; his national prejudices, however, were considerably modified by long residence in the country, and he was not a man in any case to be consciously swayed from the right. But he was old, and found it nearly impossible to keep his faculties in a state of activity, and he had no clear idea of constitutional rights. Chief-Justice Pennefather, descended from a family of Puritan "Undertakers," gorged with lands and offices during the penal times, but still on the watch for Ministerial favours for his kith and kin, had been a fierce politician, and could scarcely regard one who questioned English Supremacy or Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland except as a personal enemy. He was a skilful lawyer, but his law and his skill were as much at the service of the Crown as those of the supplest judge who found favour with the Stuarts. Mr Justice Crampton also had been a vehement Tory at the Bar, and his appointment to the office of Solicitor-General by the Whigs in 1832 had first alienated O'Connell from that party ; but on the bench he aimed to be a discreet judge and contrasted favourably with some of his colleagues. Mr Justice Perrin had been Attorney-General under the Whigs, and with the Solicitor-General Mr O'Loghlen had first instituted the practice of selecting juries in Crown cases with an approximation to fairness. These personages so bred and disciplined could no more escape from the influence of their nature and training than ordinary mortals.

The Attorney-General's statement of the case occupied two days, during which he spoke for nearly twelve hours. Public interest has seldom been more painfully strained than it was when he began ; but before he concluded it had become languid and intermittent. He had promised to disclose a foul and wicked conspiracy ; and if he had been able to prove secret consultations, correspondence with soldiers and foreigners, a military organisation or private drilling, it would have barely justified language so emphatic. But there was not a single fact relied on which was not long familiar to his audience. Speeches of O'Connell, articles from the popular journals, and endless extracts from English jurists to illustrate the law of conspiracy, sandwiched between little staid sentences of prim commonplace, constituted the interminable speech. An eye-witness, one of the Traversers indeed, has enabled us to recall this curious scene.

"Men who had expected a lofty and solemn impeachment soon sickened under the weary monotony with which Mr Smith read his litany of extracts. Drip, drip, like water from a rusty pump, the familiar facts fell from his lips. Piece by piece he threw up the bill of indictment, as he swallowed it, without mastication or digestion. Sustained attention became impossible, and he soon travelled his weary way alone. No eye was turned towards him, no ear listened to him but those of a few old imperturbable lawyers. At one of the most important points of the indictment might be seen two of the Traversers reading newspapers, one copying documents for his defence, two writing autographs in ladies' albums, one noting a brief, and the rest absent from the Court, while the majority of the junior Bar were joking *sotto voce*, the audience eating sandwiches or chatting—a painter making sketches of the ladies in the gallery—fully half the jury fiddling listlessly with their pens, the other half making painful exertions to do their duty—two or three of the counsel for the defence reading their briefs, and one of the judges fast asleep."[1]

This speech, so hard to listen to, was not wanting, when it came to be read, in method, or even in a certain persuasiveness. What was new, however, may be compressed into a paragraph or two. Mr O'Connell was not bearding English law in Ireland for the first time or by new methods. In 1831 he agitated for Repeal, and Lord Althorp warned Parliament that the direct tendency of his language and conduct was to incite insurrection. Lord John Russell on the same occasion declared if he succeeded the result would be the destruction of the British Monarchy in Ireland and the establishment of a ferocious republic. Then and now he had recommended submission to the law, but it was submission to the law till he was ready to break it successfully. The monster meetings assembled and dispersed peaceably, because the time for action had not come. He asked the people attending them, "Will you be ready when I want you again?"—a part of the scheme being to complete the organisation before the signal was given. He inquired whether they could not walk in order after a band as well as if they wore red coats, and if they could not obey Repeal Wardens as well as if these persons were called sergeants or captain. He assured them that there was a natural military strength in Ireland such as few countries possessed; her enclosures made every field a redoubt where cavalry could not charge infantry, and her roads were defiles. Was this language employed for the purpose of petitioning Parliament or promoting

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[1] *Nation*, Jan. 20th.—As I was the writer of this sketch I can vouch for the strict accuracy of all the details. The somnolent judge was Burton. The wits made constant sport of this habit, *ex. gr.*

"Nota Bene, who says—Is it Shakespeare or Sancho?
See the moonlight that's sleeping (like Burton) in banco."
M'Carthy's "Scrapes of a Sawbone."

a constitutional movement by legal agencies? So lately as September he had assured his adherents that if his present plans were frustrated they had sufficient resources remaining for success; they might increase the potato culture, and leave the entire cereal harvest uncut; and they might abandon the use of excisable articles. To leave the corn to rot on the ground, to cripple the public revenue—these were the legal and constitutional methods by which the Irish Parliament was to be restored.

In describing the formidable instrument which the jury wielded in an indictment for conspiracy the language of the Attorney-General became clear and precise.

> The mere confederacy to do an illegal act constituted the crime, though the purpose was never accomplished. It was not necessary to prove the conspiracy; the jury might assume its existence if the conduct of the accused justified the assumption. Neither was it necessary that they should be of opinion that the defendants were guilty of every portion of the conspiracy; if they were guilty of any portion of it, that was sufficient to justify a verdict against them.

Witnesses were then produced. For seven days the tedious process of proving facts which were of common notoriety, and of reading public documents and public journals, went on. Ten days were consumed in the *mêlée* of the Bar. Each Traverser was heard by counsel except O'Connell, who defended himself; and Greene, the Solicitor-General, made a reply of remarkable clearness and vigour which occupied nearly three days. Some of the speeches for the defence were reputed at the time to be marvellous efforts of forensic oratory, but read a generation later, there is a mocking and artificial tone in this hired advocacy of a national cause which is painfully disappointing. The duty of counsel was to obtain a verdict, and to this end all higher aims were subordinated; their tones were pitched to the compass, not of a nation, but of a *nisi prius* court; and the Traversers were often mortified by ignorant banter of historical names and events which they honoured.[1]

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[1] Mr Sheil spoke on behalf of John O'Connell, Mr Moore on behalf of Father Tierney, Mr Hatchell of T. M. Ray, Mr Fitzgibbon of John Gray, Mr Whiteside of Charles Gavan Duffy, Mr M'Donough of Richard Barrett, Mr Henn of Tom Steele; O'Connell's defence of himself concluded the series of speeches to the jury. Mr Whiteside, a man of large presence and sonorous voice, was supposed to have won the crown in this rhetorical contest. His speech was pronounced to be a masterpiece of advocacy, but my personal impression did not correspond with this opinion. It wanted the subtle charm of sincerity, and some pulses keenly sensitive to that wonderful instrument, the human voice, were unmoved by it. In the *Irish Monthly* for February 1877, a private letter from one of the Traversers to a *Dublin Reviewer*

The case upon which the counsel for the defence relied, stripped of whatever was merely temporary or technical, may be briefly stated:—

The jury were not empannelled to try whether the Repeal of the Union was desirable or undesirable, but to try whether the Traversers were guilty of the specific offence of conspiracy.

The offence of conspiracy consisted of an agreement to do something illegal. Unless there was an especial agreement for this object among the persons indicted there was no conspiracy. Agreement was essential; each of the defendants might entertain in his own mind an illegal intention, and yet this would not constitute the offence unless they had combined and confederated for a common object. There had been no attempt to prove any agreement for an illegal purpose. They were agreed to bring about the Repeal of the 40th George III., called the Act of Union, but that was a perfectly legal object. The effect of this distinction was signal; if men combined for a legal purpose, and if in the prosecution of the common design one of them transgressed the law, he was answerable for his own offence, but he did not implicate the innocent. Thus every one of the overt acts in the indictment might be proved, and yet it would not follow that the jury would be justified in convicting the Traversers of conspiracy. Why so? Because these overt acts might not have been done in pursuance of an illegal agreement. If meetings were illegal, why were they not separately prosecuted? To know them to be illegal, and yet encourage them to proceed, would amount to unpardonable baseness in the Government.

There was another notable departure from English practice. The Traversers were charged with a new offence—the offence of procuring the attendance of large numbers, for the seditious purpose of obtaining changes in the constitution of the country by intimidation and the exhibition of physical force. But the assembly of the people in large numbers did not constitute illegality. On the contrary, whatever England holds most dear in her institutions was obtained by the method now indicted as unlawful. The exhibition of physical force, though not the employment of it, was an ordinary and constitutional agent in movements to procure reforms from Parliament.

When the privileges of the English Parliament were invaded, the English people did not stand on scruples; they took the field, struck down the monarchy, and dragged their sovereign to the block. But there was no need

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(C. G. Duffy to Peter M'Evoy Gartlan) is published, and a paragraph is worth quoting: "To say there is not a sentence in Whiteside's speech that is not effective is to claim for him what is true of no living man, and is eminently untrue of him. There were many weak, some ill-judged, and several highly objectionable passages; and his manner throughout was a mixture of the declamatory and the familiar, begotten upon a bad debating society style by the habit of squabbling with Mr M'Donough. There is perhaps no reason why you should say this in so many words; but really there ought to be some shade in your picture, as the glare is too much for moderate eyes. I conceive you have committed the same error with respect to O'Connell. Posterity are entitled to know that he never delivered a speech so carelessly and ineffectively as this one. Let them interpret the fact as they please—and it is capable of a highly favourable construction—they have a claim, at all events, to have it stated in a journal that looks to be a magazine of historical materials." As a rhetorical effort Sheil's speech was superior to Whiteside's.

to go back for examples to distant times. When the Whigs wanted to carry the Reform Bill of 1832, a hundred and fifty thousand men assembled in Birmingham and threatened to march on London. A resolution not to pay taxes was passed, and was applauded by Lord Fitzwilliam. Cabinet ministers became correspondents of the Birmingham Union. Cumber was reduced to ashes, Bristol was in flames, and the Whig Ministers, instead of dissociating themselves from popular opinion, which had plainly violated the law, proposed to swamp the House of Peers, and declared that the whisper of a faction must not drown the voice of the people.

But none of these English confederacies was indicted for conspiracy to procure changes by means of intimidation. Even in Ireland no precedent could be discovered for this charge. For the last three generations the history of Ireland was occupied chiefly with popular organisations for the attainment of one public object or another. Almost every object sought was now the law of the land, and had been conceded because it was demanded by organised opinion.

But they were not indicted for a conspiracy to intimidate the legislature. The ordinary agents for obtaining or resisting constitutional changes were popular power, popular enthusiasm, and popular determination. Let the twelve gentlemen in the box hold a meeting to accomplish some legitimate public purpose, and as they were but twelve the Press would ignore their meeting and the Government disregard it. But let twelve hundred of the same class meet for the same object and the reporters would flock to hear them and the Ministers might hearken. But suppose twelve hundred thousand men met for the same object, they must be listened to; and they would no more be conspirators, or an illegal assembly, in the last case than in the first.

There was another startling novelty in this indictment. It charged the Traversers with a conspiracy to promote ill-will among the Queen's subjects in Ireland against her subjects in England. This was an offence never before heard of in criminal law. If it were an offence, on what evidence did it rest? The Traversers seeking to convince their audience that a Repeal of the Union would be beneficial had recourse to the most powerful arguments that could be employed—illustrations from past history. It was not alleged that they falsified facts or misquoted history; and if past history was calculated to produce ill-will between the two peoples that was a fact to be deplored, but it was no fault of the Traversers.

The indictment charged the Traversers with a conspiracy to excite discontent and disaffection. If this charge was supported in a court of law there was an end of all chance of getting rid of bad laws and obtaining good ones! How was it possible to convince men that a new law was necessary, or that an existing law ought to be amended or repealed, without a risk of exciting discontent among those who profited by the law as it stood?

It charged them also with a conspiracy to create discontent in the army. What was the evidence for this charge? Certain speeches of Mr O'Connell, in which he expressed an opinion that non-commissioned officers ought to be promoted, instead of a system of purchase prevailing; a letter from Father Power, and an article from the *Nation* on the conditions which render a war just and necessary. The Attorney-General did not prosecute the priest who wrote the letter, or the paper which published it, but made it part of a conspiracy by persons who never saw the writer and never read the letter. This was not fair dealing. Why were those Traversers who had no control over the newspapers to be made responsible for them? Mr O'Connell was

treated as if he were editor of the *Freeman*, the *Pilot*, and the *Nation*. If a prosecution for conspiracy were instituted in England against the Anti-Corn Law League, would it be reasonable to hold Mr Cobden and Mr Bright responsible for every article in the *Chronicle*, the *Globe*, and the *Sun?* The most notable conditions of a conspiracy were wanting. Mr Barrett was not a member of the Repeal Association, Mr Ray spoke but once, Mr Tierney had attended but one of the monster meetings, a meeting in his own parish, at which none of the other Traversers were present; Mr Duffy had not attended even one; and Mr O'Connell had no connection with the newspapers. If several persons were each ignorant of the acts of the others, it was settled law that under such circumstances they could not be considered guilty of them; yet Mr Tierney was indicted for speeches, writings, and transactions which had occurred eight months before he joined the Association or had any communication with the other Traversers.

O'Connell defended himself. His speech, which was not addressed to the jury but to the world, was a justification of his principles as a Repealer. But it was not eminently successful—the materials were necessarily borrowed from familiar sources, and were not relieved on this occasion by freshness of treatment or vigour of delivery.

This was the case for the defence, and on this case the Traversers were entitled to a verdict of acquittal. For whatever were their aims or their acts, they were not guilty of the offence charged in the indictment: they had not conspired together for an illegal purpose. Of O'Connell it may be confidently asserted that he was no more guilty of conspiracy than of bigamy. But when the Solicitor-General had replied, and the Chief-Justice had charged the jury, the case was brought back to the narrow issue whether or not the municipal law had been violated; that issue by which English judges in all centuries have sought to trammel popular power, and under which nearly every function which Englishmen venerate in their constitution would, in its first exercise, have been pronounced illegal and criminal.[1]

The Solicitor-General's reply was vigorous but narrow. He admitted that a Repeal of the Union was the object the Traversers had in view, but they sought to accomplish an object not in itself illegal by illegal means: first by the exhibition of physical force, whereas an Act of

[1] A startling incident interrupted the course of the defence. Mr Fitzgibbon vexed the Attorney-General by a personal reflection, and the law officer who was "prosecuting seven gentlemen for an imputed misdemeanour immediately sought to commit a felony on his own account"; he sent a hostile message to his learned friend. It was an incident which might have brought the prosecution to an ignominious close; for counsel menaced in the performance of their duty by threats of personal violence from the representative of the Crown might have thrown up their briefs and retired. But the Court, with a benevolence none of which it reserved for the benefit of the Traversers, interfered, and the quarrel was composed.

Parliament could only be properly repealed by the uncontrolled action of the Legislature.

Their meetings were orderly; the charge was not that they were disorderly, but that they were held for the unlawful purpose of alarming and intimidating the people of England and the Legislature of the empire. Mr O'Connell suggested that the time might come when the manufactories of England and the City of London would be burned by Irishmen. Was it not plain that the object was intimidation? and intimidation was the offence charged in the indictment. At Mullaghmast Mr O'Connell told the people that in '98 there were brave men at their head, but there were also many traitors who left them exposed to the sword of the enemy. The enemy!—that was the king's army. He told them that it was an ill-organised, a premature, and a foolish insurrection; but they had a leader now who would never allow them to be led astray. What was the meaning of "led astray"? It meant that their present leader would not let them break out too soon, but teach them to wait for a regular course of organisation and preparation. Mr O'Connell in addressing the jury had an opportunity of explaining or qualifying his language, but he had not done so in a single instance. It was a fact of great significance that Mr O'Connell had not attended Parliament or adopted any measure to raise the question in a constitutional manner. On the contrary, all authority was concentrated in the Association. There was scarcely a public department in the State whose functions it had not usurped, and scarcely a public officer whose duties were not assumed by some one or more of the Traversers. One of them had taken on himself the office of Lord Chancellor and regulated the administration of justice; another that of Prime Minister; and above all, there was a Chancellor of the Exchequer and a Treasury.

The temper of the Chief-Justice had been sorely tried by the delay, by the unexampled plain-speaking of counsel, and by the comments of the Press. His turn had now come, and he was determined to make short work of the defence. Grown grey in the exercise of arbitrary authority, confident from long impunity of protection in Parliament and completely hardened against opinion at home, he forgot that on this occasion he had the civilised world for an audience, and proceeded to deliver himself as if the Queen's Bench was a court of final judgment, and that his charge would find no echo beyond the circular road. A Whig peer, who had been Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, afterwards declared in the House of Lords that when he came to read the charge in a newspaper he could not persuade himself in the first instance that he was not still reading the Solicitor-General's speech for the prosecution.[1] A "lapsus" of the Chief-Justice during the trial lent this criticism a keen edge. In criminal cases the presiding judge ordinarily regards himself as the prisoner's counsel, but in laying down a

[1] Lord Fortescue.

principle of law the Chief-Justice observed that he was speaking "under the correction of the gentlemen of the other side"; the other side from this prerogative judge being the side of the defence. His main purpose seemed to be to supply oversights or deficiencies in the case for the Crown, and he applied himself to carry it out without shame or reserve. He told the jury that he saw no great difficulty in the law or the facts. He bade them put out of their minds the idea that the offence of conspiracy necessarily implied secrecy, as had been suggested; if the parties conspired to overawe Parliament and cause alarm and terror in Her Majesty's subjects, publicity and not secrecy might be the direct agent. Suppose the object of collecting together these hundreds of thousands was not to commit a present breach of the peace, but to deter the Legislature from exercising a deliberate and unbiassed judgment on public questions, that was an illegal object. The speeches at those meetings were generally made by Mr David O'Connell, but others of the Traversers seized the opportunity of displaying themselves.

The cards of the Association, of which the Crown Counsel had not made much use, seemed a very serious offence in the eyes of the judge. One of them, he remarked, had on the face of it inscribed in green colours an enumeration of the powers, population, and resources of Ireland relatively to other countries, and it concluded with a sort of chorus "And yet she has no Parliament." To disseminate upon these cards that from their strength and consequence the people of Ireland ought to have a Parliament, and yet had not one, was to disseminate a statement of matters upon which the members of the Association had no right to make a decision. Others of them contained portraits of persons implicated in rebellious or treasonable practices.

The case of Mr Tierney was full of difficulties to many friends of the Government, but it presented none to the Chief-Justice. The jury were invited to mark that though he only joined the Association the day after the Mullaghmast meeting, "he had a little pet meeting of his own in his own parish the day of the Tara meeting." Nothing that was said or done there had been pressed by the Crown as of any consequence, but he attended the Repeal Association on the third of October—only a fortnight before the prosecution commenced—and it was for the jury to consider whether his speech on that occasion did not fall in with the common design of the defendants. Why did he introduce such topics as English perfidy and cruelty, Irish victories and English defeats? It was for the jury to say

whether they were brought forward, after the lapse of two or three hundred years, to promote Christian charity and peace? Was his speech not in unison with the speech of Mr O'Connell detailing the massacres at Mullaghmast and Wexford? Did the jury see here anything of community of purpose and design? It was for them to say.

Before the judge had finished some of the critical audience who listened to him pronounced that he had misdirected the jury, a blunder which would render the trial void; and others were of opinion that he had disgraced the Irish Courts before the world by the temper of his charge. "Mr Daniel O'Connell" was not a decorous form to employ in speaking of a man who in his own profession was his undoubted superior, and who had refused a judicial office of the same rank as the Chief-Justiceship; and if the object of the Traversers, as he alleged, was to indulge in the vanity of "displaying themselves," that was not an illegal object, and was scarcely compatible with the belief that they were engaged in the formidable conspiracy charged in the indictment. When he spoke of the class of persons whose heads were engraved on the Repeal cards, it was difficult to restrain an impatient junior from reminding him that one of them was copied from the frieze of the hall where the Traversers were on trial,[1] and others from the walls of the University, carved or painted at a time when Ireland had a Parliament and was not ashamed to commemorate her historical men. Several of them were anterior to William Wallace and Robert Bruce, whom their countrymen were not forbidden to honour, though one was a proclaimed traitor and the other died on an English gallows. The picture of Parliament brooding over the public interest in a solemn stupor on which the disturbing voice of the people who created it must never obtrude was in the highest style of judicial rhetoric; but in truth it is a species of nonsense which is only talked by men in full-bottomed wigs. Parliament has never made any serious political change except under the goad of public impatience, sharply applied; and the special charge of intimidation, which the learned judge considered so formidable in this case, proved on investigation before a superior court to disclose no legal offence whatever. The Constitution confers rank and authority on judges, and fences them round with

[1] This was Odlam Fodlah, who gave to ancient Ireland a constitution and a code; a hero as worthy of national veneration as Alfred or Charlemagne. But this modern Puritan had the same ignorant contempt of him as may be supposed to have marked the first Pennefather who carried a knapsack and a ramrod.

immunity that they may be able to do justice without fear or favour; when they employ these advantages to promote party or personal objects they are justly regarded as amongst the basest of mankind.

The jury accepted the opinions so energetically pressed upon them. After a little decent delay they convicted all the Traversers—Mr Tierney, who had joined the Association only five days before the Clontarf meeting, as well as Mr O'Connell or Mr Ray, who had been members from its foundation. Mr Tierney was convicted on one count only, while some of the Traversers were convicted on several, and others on all the counts; but they were alike declared guilty of the crime charged in the indictment—unlawful and seditious conspiracy. The trial had lasted twenty-five days, but the result was confidently predicted from the moment the jury were sworn. O'Connell himself at that time whispered to one of the Traversers that the Attorney-General was moderate in only charging them with conspiracy, as these twelve gentlemen would have made no difficulty in convicting them of the murder of the Italian boy.[1]

The sentence, according to the practice in misdemeanour cases, was postponed till the opening of the ensuing term.

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[1] The murder of the Italian boy was a mysterious crime which had recently caused an intense sensation in Dublin and baffled the skill of the police.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT PARLIAMENT AND ENGLISH REFORMERS THOUGHT OF THE TRIAL.—THE SENTENCE.

THE Government had obtained a verdict, but it remained to be seen whether they had not bought it too dearly. Counsel in the case and eminent English lawyers who were consulted, agreed that good grounds existed for an appeal to the House of Lords by writ of error; a process which if successful would quash the entire proceedings. Under these circumstances the obvious policy of the Association was not to accept the law laid down in the Queen's Bench as final, till the appeal was heard. But the lawyers, who were in general anti-Repealers, and his old allies among the Irish Whigs, who had party ends in view, "both-eared" O'Connell on the necessity of rendering the Association prosecution-proof for the future, and he determined to act as if the law of Pennefather could not be disputed.

Immediately after the conviction a meeting of the General Committee was summoned to deliberate on the situation. The Committee was an overgrown cabinet, but a cabinet wanting whose concurrence the leader could no longer act, without serious danger of a catastrophe. O'Connell opened the conference by a proposal which amazed and dismayed the best of his associates. He was of opinion that the Association ought to be immediately dissolved and the Arbitration Courts abandoned. He was prepared to found a new Association, of which no newspaper proprietor would be a member, and whose wardens would receive instructions and perform duties different from those which had been made the subject of such serious rebuke in the Queen's Bench.

To abandon the Association which had organised the country, which was the heir and representative of the monster meetings, and which great political parties in France and America had treated on the footing of a national government, was to lay down our arms. A divorce from the national Press might prove nearly as disastrous a mistake. Since the struggle for Irish liberty had been transferred from the field

to the forum, it had been commonly organised in newspaper offices. It was through a popular journal that Swift, that Charles Lucas, that Flood and Grattan, had successfully renewed the contest with English ascendancy. And in the Catholic struggle Sheil had accomplished as much with the pen of the journalist as with the voice of the orator. As regards O'Connell himself, his control of the people sprung in a large degree from his authority as a counsellor who had advised them successfully in contests with the law, and to abandon the Arbitration Courts, for whose legality he stood pledged, almost amounted to an abdication of his functions. At best the remedy was futile; for in truth it was not the Repeal Wardens, the newspapers, or the popular courts, but his own menacing speeches which had proved the dangerous feature in the indictment. Nevertheless, had the proposal been made in a public meeting of the Association, it would probably have been carried, so lively was the fear of dissension and so habitual the deference towards the leader. But in the Committee a vigorous free opinion had always prevailed, and here was an occasion, more stringent than any that had hitherto arisen, to exercise it.

The young men opposed this policy in language as moderate as men could employ, suddenly brought face to face with such an emergency. They would regard the dissolution of the Association, they declared, as a fatal wound inflicted on the cause. O'Connell might take any course he thought advisable on his own motion, and his great authority would no doubt induce the people to consider it favourably; but the course now proposed he could not take with the advice and consent of the General Committee, for the bulk of the Committee would not advise it or consent to it. Nor would they pledge themselves to follow him into a new Association, if the Association which had accomplished so much, and whose legality the Crown had not seriously questioned, was sacrificed to the prerogative law of Chief-Justice Pennefather.[1]

Smith O'Brien, who held somewhat the position of an umpire, concurred generally in the proposal of O'Connell, but Dr Gray leaned to the opposite opinion. The contest became critical. On one side was the leader, and on the other many of the men of most mark and capacity in the movement, including two of the convicted conspirators. O'Connell, who was too sagacious to attempt forcing his way while

[1] "It was not contended by the Attorney-General that the Association was an illegal body, nor do I pronounce any opinion one way or other upon that subject."—Mr Justice CRAMPTON.

there was any chance of winning it, asked was he, or were men who might be induced to join hereafter, to be responsible for everything written in the newspapers? He was reminded that the law of conspiracy in this respect was still to be tested by appeal; that Mr Barrett had thought proper to plead that he was not a member of the Association, but that this fact had not prevented his being convicted as a conspirator, or saved the others from being held responsible for his writings. At this critical moment I proposed that all the proprietors of newspapers should resign, rather than the Association should be dissolved. Someone else suggested that the Arbitration Courts might be maintained by the people locally, without direct control by the Association. To avoid an open rupture, and to keep the Association intact, this compromise was finally adopted. At the next meeting, Dr Gray, Mr Barrett, Alderman Staunton, and Mr Gavan Duffy sent in their resignations, and the proprietors of provincial journals followed their example. The Arbitration Courts were informed that all connection between them and the Association was at an end, and in a little time they died out. New Repeal cards, shorn of all historical association, were prepared. And the Repeal Wardens, on the motion of Mr John O'Connell, were directed to confine themselves strictly to the duties of collecting Repeal rent, obtaining signatures to petitions, and watching over the preservation of peace till new regulations were issued.[1]

It was understood that these concessions to opinion outside the Association were to be rewarded by considerable Whig achievements on behalf of Ireland and in defence of the convicted conspirators. The Federal party were growing in importance. Mr Patterson, one of the members for London, and Joseph Sturge were named as among its English recruits; and Irish Whigs of great position and possessions showed an increasing desire that something might be conceded which would strengthen the connection between the two countries, and furnish an excuse, if not a justification, for the abandonment of the extreme popular demand. At a meeting at Charlemont House it was agreed to

[1] Mr Doheny has made an allusion, the only one which has hitherto been published, to this transaction. "Immediately after the close of the State Trial, as well as I can remember, Mr O'Connell proposed the dissolution of the Association, with a view of establishing a new body, from which should be excluded all the 'illegal' attributes and accidents of the old. The suggestion was resisted by Mr O'Brien and all those understood to belong to the Young Ireland party. They protested against such a course as false, craven, and fatal, and Mr O'Connell at once yielded to their vehement remonstrance."—Doheny's "Felon's Track."

urge upon Parliament a number of reforms, among which the most notable was a proposal that the Imperial Parliament should hold a session in Ireland once every three years. Lord Charlemont affirmed that Pitt had this project in view at the time of the Union, and it was known, within a narrow circle, that the English Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Whately, still put faith in it. The idea was also thrown out of creating a Secretary of State for Ireland responsible to a majority of the Irish members. The Duke of Leinster, the Earl of Meath, the Earl of Charlemont, and other Whig peers, approved of the scheme, and it was hinted that two of them, Lord Stuart de Decies and Lord Milltown, if these demands were not conceded, would join the movement for Repeal. A little earlier the *Edinburgh Review* had advised the holding of an occasional session of Parliament in Dublin, and the project promised to become a Whig panacea.[1] But Lord Ffrench, who was invited to join the movement and refused, brought its practical value into question. What the country required, he said, was not an itinerant, but a domestic Legislature; not merely a resident, but a native Parliament; a Parliament of men not educated in habitual ignorance of Ireland and contempt of Irishmen.

O'Connell's Whig friends were eager that he should go to England to cultivate this friendly sentiment, and after the contest in the General Committee it was a question of anxious consideration whether it was a greater danger that he should go or stay. Davis thought that the balance of risk, in the temper of mind that led him to propose the dissolution of the Association, was in remaining in Ireland.

"If O'C. were firmer," he wrote to Smith O'Brien, "I would say he ought not to go to England; but fancy his speeches at ten meetings here with the State Trial terror on him. I fear we must keep him out of that danger by an English trip till Parliament meets, and then all will be well."[2]

The Irish Tories, like the Whigs, had been talking occasionally a speculative and conditional nationality; but the sentiment had scarcely gone beyond the point where it was employed as a menace to a Minister

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[1] The article in the *Review*, which covered a wide field of speculation, was written by Mr Senior and revised by Lord John Russell, and probably prompted by Mr Senior's friend, Dr Whately. See "Macvey Napier's Correspondence." The project of an occasional Session of the Imperial Parliament in Dublin, however, was first mooted by William Cobbett, and will be found in a list of proposed reforms which he circulated, generally known as "Cobbett's Propositions."

[2] Cahermoyle Correspondence, Nov. 18th. The Cahermoyle Correspondence are papers in possession of Mr O'Brien's eldest son, kept at the family seat, Cahermoyle, County Limerick.

not sufficiently amenable to their advice. Two incidents, however, proved decisively that the asperities of the past were dying out. The Royal Dublin Society was a Conservative camp; four years earlier Archbishop Murray had been blackballed in it for no intelligible reason except that he was a prelate of the Catholic Church. Smith O'Brien desired to become a member, in order to turn it to account for literary and antiquarian purposes. He refused, however, to be proposed by any of his friends, or to be made the subject of a canvass; he simply sent his name to the Secretary as a candidate, and on a ballot he was elected by a majority of a hundred and five to five. At the same time, mainly by the influence of Davis and John Pigot, a Society was formed for the establishment of a National Gallery in Dublin. It contained amongst its council and officers Tory or Whig, and Nationalist, noblemen and gentlemen, in about equal numbers, and it laid the basis of what has now become a flourishing public institution.

Parliament met on the 1st of February,[1] before sentence was pronounced, and the speech from the Throne was framed to ward off criticism from the State Trial. "I forbear," the Queen was made to say, "from observation on events in Ireland, in respect to which proceedings are pending before the proper legal tribunals." But the Opposition could not be driven off from so tempting a theme. The Government were immediately assailed by skirmishers with a shower of questions respecting the Jury, the Chief-Justice's charge, and the Attorney-General's duel. As soon as the dilatory forms of Parliament permitted, Lord John Russell moved a party motion on the state of Ireland. A party motion is a motion designed to displace the Government or to damage them with a view to their future displacement, and it will be instructive to note the opinions which men who hoped soon to govern the empire held of the recent transactions in the Court of Queen's Bench in Dublin. The temper of the times seemed to have transformed the frigid Whig statesman into an Irish tribune. He spoke with a vigour and directness which startled his audience, and uttered truths which may still be pondered on with advantage.

Ireland was filled with troops, the barracks were fortified, a regiment was recently drawn up in the Castle yard, and preparations made as if the outbreak of civil war was hourly expected; did not these facts justify him in believing that the country was occupied but not governed by those who held the reins of power? In England the Government was a government of opinion, in Ireland it was notoriously a government of force.

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[1] 1844.

Let the house consider the administration of justice as it was illustrated by the State Trial. Nominally the laws in Ireland were the same as in England, but were they administered in the same manner? In Ireland the sect to which a man belonged, the form in which he worshipped his Creator, were grounds on which the law separated him from his fellows and bound him to the endurance of a system of the most cruel injustice. Sir Michael O'Loghlen, who had travelled the Munster Circuit for nineteen years, declared that in criminal cases it was the habitual practice of the Crown to set aside all Catholic and all Liberal Protestant jurors, and it was his conviction that the same practice prevailed on all the other circuits in Ireland ; and so it had been in the late State Trial. Could the same thing have happened in Yorkshire, Sussex, or Kent? Was this the fulfilment of the promises made at the time of the Union? Was it wonderful that the poorer classes, instead of having recourse to the public tribunals, should fly to violence? Their insubordinate habits sprang from that fatal system which denied a man on account of his creed the advantages of a free administration of justice.

The nature of the charges levelled at the Traversers amazed the leader of the Opposition as much as the unfair character of the tribunal. They had been indicted for exciting ill-will among the people of Ireland against the people of England. Did the Government know of no man in England who had done the same thing, just transposing the words "Ireland and England"?

Was there no eminent person who had endeavoured to excite that feeling among the English people by calling the people of Ireland aliens? Had that person been prosecuted by the Attorney-General in a speech of eleven hours? or if the offender was protected by having uttered his words in Parliament, was he at least debarred from the confidence of the Crown? On the contrary, he was at that moment at the head of the magistracy and the law of England, prosecuting to conviction some of the ablest men in Ireland, on the charge of having excited ill-will against England.[1]

The debate lasted for nine nights, and was in the main a contest between Whigs and Tories for the possession of the Treasury. But some statements and admissions were made, the significance of which outlives the party conflict.

Sir Charles Napier, in a speech which smacked of the freedom and bluntness of his profession, invited Englishmen to make the case their own.

Napoleon had once an army at Boulogne to invade England, and forty-three ships of war down Channel. If he had effected a landing in England (and speaking recently to Marshal Soult, that accomplished soldier

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[1] Lord Lyndhurst, at that time Chancellor, had on a former occasion spoken of the Irish as "aliens in blood, language, and religion." He was himself the son of an Irish emigrant, and was born in one of the North American colonies, which had since become the United States.

thought if the fleet were well manned it might have been done) the great General with 200,000 or 300,000 veterans might have conquered England. If he had conquered England and brought over French bishops and French priests, and forced on the English a religion they did not like, would not the English be anxious to drive every man Jack of them out of the country, religion and all? And if the Irish were treated as a conquered people, it was no wonder if they would do the same sort of thing.

Young England, a group of cultivated young men who professed to disregard party aims and traditions, reiterated the protest against misgovernment which they had made on Smith O'Brien's motion in the previous Session. Mr Smythe,[1] who was often their spokesman, uttered a truth on this occasion which arrested attention by a courageous boldness reaching almost to genius. He detested all extremes, he said, but considering who the Irish people were, if Ireland must be ruled by faction, he would rather see it governed in the spirit of Tyrconnell than in the spirit of Cromwell. The founder and guide of the new party, who were still imperfectly understood by Parliament, disturbed Tory prejudices more rudely by proposing to reverse their entire Irish system in Church and State. The duty of a wise English Minister, in Mr Disraeli's opinion, was to effect by policy all the changes which a revolution would effect by force. He foreshadowed the changes such a Minister should undertake by describing the evils under which the country suffered. "A starving population, an absentee aristocracy, an alien Church, and the weakest Executive in the world: this was the Irish question."

In a party contest in those days Mr Macaulay was always on duty. On this ocasion he opened his historical *camera obscura*, and invited men to note that it was only Whigs or Tories with Whig opinions who had known how to govern Ireland.

Three great statesmen had conceived plans for the pacification of that country, each on a system of his own. That of Cromwell was simple and strong, if it was not also hateful and cruel; it might be comprised in one word constantly uttered in the English army at that time, "extirpation." But he died before his plan was completed, and it died with him. The policy adopted by William III. and his advisers was in seeming less cruel, but whether in reality less cruel might be doubted. The Irish Catholics were to live, multiply, and replenish the earth, but they were to be what the Helots were in Sparta or the Greeks under the Ottoman, or men of colour in Pennsylvania. They were to be excluded from every office of honour and profit, every step in the road of life was to be fettered by some galling restriction. If he desired military glory, the Catholic might gain it in the

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[1] Afterwards Lord Strangford, and the hero of Lord Beaconsfield's novel of "Coningsby."

armies of Austria or France ; if political success, in the diplomacy of Italy or Spain ; but at home he was a mere Gibeonite. The third was Pitt's. He had projected the Union, but the Union was only a part of his plan ; he wished to blend not only the parliaments but the nations. The disabilities of the Catholics were to be removed, and their clergy and the education of their youth to be adequately provided for. Had his plan been carried out, the Union with Ireland would perhaps be as far out of the reach of agitation as the Union with Scotland. But he was not permitted to carry it out. And Canning, who followed him and adopted his policy, as a reward for his foresight, was hounded to death—the House knew by whom.[1]

When Canning was carried to his grave in Westminster Abbey the Catholics began to rely on themselves for success, to array that formidable display of force, just keeping within the limits of the law, which afterwards produced such memorable consequences. Before he was two years in his grave it led to a result which their noblest advocates had been unable to achieve—they were emancipated. Was it not inevitable that from that moment there should have been an opinion, deeply rooted in the minds of the whole Catholic population, that from England, or at all events from the powerful party which then governed England, nothing was to be got by reason or by justice, but everything by fear? Hence, when the concession of Catholic Emancipation was made, it deserved no gratitude and obtained none.

The skilful rhetorician then took up the recent transactions for review.

As respects the exclusively Protestant jury, the technicalities of law might be on the side of the Crown, but why had they regarded such a case merely from a technical point of view? In the trial of an alien, where prejudice was likely to arise, the law mercifully provided a remedy. Was he tried by twelve Englishmen? No ; their ancestors knew that this was not the way in which justice could be obtained. Half of the jury must be of the country where the offence was committed, the other half of the country to which the prisoner belonged. The Tories were ready enough to call the Catholics of Ireland aliens when it suited their purpose, but the first privilege of aliensship they practically denied them, and he invited the House to mark what sort of a prisoner they had got hold of by these unfair methods. Go where you might on the Continent, dine at any *table d'hôte*, travel upon any steamboat, enter any conveyance, from the moment your speech betrays you an Englishman, the very first question asked is, "What has become of Mr O'Connell?" It was a most unhappy fact (but it was impossible to dispute it) that throughout the Continent there was a feeling respecting the connection between England and Ireland not very unlike that which existed with respect to the connection between Russia and Poland.

All the details of the trial, with which we are familiar, the motions made, the opposition of the Crown, and the decisions of the Court, the Irish practice in criminal cases, and the English practice, were fought over again by the Attorney-General for Ireland and Mr Sheil. The

[1] To wit, by Peel.

Catholics were not set aside as Catholics, Mr T. B. C. Smith insisted, but as Repealers. Could he try the accused by partisans of their own? Several of the excluded jurors, Mr Sheil replied, were Repealers, but assuredly not all. He had in his hands affidavits from two gentlemen who were set aside, declaring they were not in any manner connected with the Repeal movement. And when the Government were so solicitous not to put Repeal partisans on the jury, how came they to put anti-Repeal partisans on it?

One of the jurors, Mr Faulkner, had been sheriff in the old Corporation, from which all Catholics were excluded. He had taken part in a furious meeting against municipal reform four years ago, in which O'Connell was denounced as the disgrace and scourge of this generation, who by the aid of a crafty and ambitious priesthood was organising the Irish Romanists to rebellion. Had this juror not already prejudged the question to be tried? Mr Thompson, another juror, was in the new Corporation as a Tory member, and in the previous year, when O'Connell had made his memorable motion for Repeal, had seconded an amendment promising to support and maintain by every means in his power the legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland. Was he unprejudiced in the premises? Six other jurors were men who had habitually voted against O'Connell at the Dublin election. Were these persons indifferent between the Crown and the Traversers? O'Connell might have said, like Louis XVI., "I look for judges, and I find none but accusers here."

But the speech which produced the most profound and lasting impression was that of Sir Thomas Wilde. It was a party speech, doubtless, but he spoke with the authority of a man in the front rank of his profession, who had been the official head of the English Bar, and whom, it might be reasonably assumed, a still greater distinction awaited. He spoke not only with the authority, but necessarily with the reserve and caution which such a position imposes. The manner in which the offence had been charged by the Crown was a method, he declared, most unfavourable to public liberty; and its adoption was lamented in Westminster Hall as a disgrace to the law. The trial was on a par with the indictment; when it was discovered that so many Catholic names had been abstracted from the jury list, it was the clear duty of the Crown to consent that the panel should be quashed. But on the contrary they upheld it. Was not that act, he demanded, one of dishonour? Could any weight be attached to a verdict so obtained? It was no verdict. Of the Chief-Justice's charge he expressed a grave disapproval.

Mr O'Connell's defence consisted in this contention: You charge me with uttering certain expressions with a certain intent; you select certain passages from my speeches; I call on you to read the whole of these

speeches by which those sentences are qualified. And during the defence the time was chiefly occupied with reading passages other than those which the Crown had cited. But not one word of the matter thus read was referred to in the summing-up of the Judge. The Solicitor-General had got particular passages printed on pieces of paper for his reply, and as he read them the learned Judge said, "Hand them up to me." These passages were read in the summing-up to the jury, and the points which were most violent were left to the jury without a sentence of the qualifying passages. On these premises he was prepared to affirm and maintain the cardinal proposition that Mr O'Connell had not had a fair trial.

The debate was damaging to the Government, but they were strong in supporters who were beyond the influence of debate, and a majority of ninety-nine refused to consider the state of Ireland. In the Lords, the Marquis of Normanby raised the same question, but was met by a similar majority.[1] And the noble friends of the Administration were even more secure from being converted by debate than the majority in the Commons, for by virtue of the system of proxies they included in their number Lord Ellenborough, who was in Calcutta; Lord Saltoun, who was in China, Lord Tweeddale, who was in Bombay; and Lord Sidmouth, who might reasonably be considered to be in his grave.[2]

These were noble sentiments, it must be confessed, which were delivered in defence of public liberty by eminent statesmen. And there are enlightened Englishmen who cannot forgive Ireland that she has not felt bound by ties of eternal gratitude to defenders so magnanimous. But alas! nations cannot live upon noble sentiments any more than they can live upon wind. Five years later Lord John Russell and Mr Macaulay were in office, having Sir Thomas Wilde and Mr Sheil for colleagues, and juries were packed in political cases in Ireland, as we shall see, without scruple or shame, precisely as they had been packed under the Tories. And Mr Disraeli was since called three times to a commanding political position, but he never found leisure to effect by policy the changes which a revolution would effect by force.

During this debate O'Connell went to London and became im-

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[1] The majority in the Lords was 97.

[2] Speech of Thomas Duncombe. Lord Lansdowne renewed the subject a little later on a motion for the instructions issued to Crown Law Officers relative to the challenging of juries. The practice of exclusion, he said, was so inveterate that there were cities in Ireland where for generations a Catholic had not sat on a jury. After the practice of admitting them had been tried the happiest results followed. He could quote the opinion of the most eminent Law Officers, Crown Solicitors, and magistrates, that from that moment it became known that Catholics were to act upon juries, the administration of justice was improved, and Catholic jurors did their duty in an exemplary manner.

mediately the object of party intrigues. When he entered the House of Commons, accompanied by a number of Irish members, the Opposition received him with clamorous applause, and the member in possession at the moment invited Peel to consider what he would gain by sending such a man to jail? He attended a meeting of the Anti-Corn Law League at Covent Garden, and the theatre rang with applause. A little later he was invited to Birmingham by the Radicals, headed by Joseph Sturge, who assured him that if the franchise were extended to the industrious classes a perfect union between the countries would be established. He was invited to Manchester and received in Free Trade Hall, where Sir Thomas Potter proposed a resolution, insisting that "full, complete, and equal justice should be accorded to Ireland." He subsequently visited Liverpool and Coventry, and in each town his reception was enthusiastic; but in each town, as if they were moved by a common impulse, or schooled by a common prompter, the aim of the meetings was such concessions to Ireland as would render repeal of the Union unnecessary. These ovations concluded with a dinner to the convict in Covent Garden Theatre. The notable persons present were chiefly English Catholic peers and English Radical commoners. The Earl of Shrewsbury and Sharman Crawford, with both of whom O'Connell had maintained fierce controversy, forgot their feuds and attended; and Dr Bowring and Sir John Easthope headed a muster of Radical members. The official Whigs, however, kept away; not one man who had then attained, or who has ever attained, to office was present. The relation of that class to O'Connell at all times was one which a proud man would scarcely have brooked. They had vehemently denied in Parliament having any alliance with him, when such a denial was not only uncourteous but substantially untrue. They apologised for having invited the foremost man of his race to the official hospitalities of Dublin Castle; and pleaded that the judicial office which they proffered him was not an office connected with the administration of criminal law, at a time when the Irish Bench was thronged with bitter partisans, and seven million of Catholics did not see one man of their blood or creed in the ermine: and the social relations which existed between him and the leaders of the Administration subsisting by his support were such as may well amaze a later generation. When Guizot was ambassador in London in 1840 he desired to meet the great Tribune, who filled a larger space in the thoughts of France than Althorp or Melbourne. But O'Connell was never at Holland House, or Lansdowne House,

or any other of the official houses where the ambassador was invited; and it was only by the good offices of an Irish lady, whose husband was whipper-in for the Whigs, that they at length met.[1]

In 1833 he had been willing to accept office, and the position of Attorney-General was suggested to him. Dazzled it may be by the prospect of carrying over to the side of the people the formidable authority which Saurin wielded in the interest of the Protestant Ascendancy, he consented; but the haughty prejudice of Lord Grey rendered the negotiations abortive.[2] Finally they offered him the employment in which the eloquence and vivacity of Curran had been stifled; to become Master of the Rolls would be a preferment carrying no political consequences, and he refused. But his refusal was a half measure; he accepted favours from the Whigs for his family and friends, and even exacted them on occasions; and in return he enabled them still to count upon him as a steady ally in their party contests.

O'Connell's reception in England, following the modifications to which the Association had submitted, led to sinister rumours. Certain Irish Whigs began to whisper that Repeal would be dropped, and remedial measures, of which they had a plentiful supply on hand, substituted. The Whig journals in London exhorted the Irish leaders to remember the sympathy exhibited during the State Trials, to note the reception accorded to O'Connell in England, and to enable Lord John Russell to give practical effect to the goodwill of his party by frankly abandoning a measure altogether unattainable. The verdict of the packed jury would never be enforced, and justice for the future would be fairly administered. In the recent debate, however, Lord John Russell had specified his Irish policy, and it was ill calculated to second these intrigues of his partisans. The reforms proposed by the Irish Whig peers were not alluded to. The promises of the great towns to O'Connell were passed over in silence. The project which

[1] Guizot's "History of My Times," 8th April 1840. "I felt surprised at never meeting in this Whig circle a man with whom the party had long been connected, and whose support was indispensable to them, the celebrated Irishman, Daniel O'Connell. I expressed this one day to Mrs Stanley, now Lady Stanley of Alderley, daughter of Lord Dillon, an estimable lady, whose husband was at that time whipper-in for the Whigs. . . . 'Do you wish to know Mr O'Connell?' said she to me, 'Yes, certainly.' 'Well, I will arrange that.'" In Liberal circles which were not official the same coldness prevailed. "The leading Liberals," says Mrs Grote in the life of her husband, "avoided contact with the Liberator, as he was called, and we ourselves never but once met him in private society, and then it was at Mr Charles Buller's, in Westminster, at dinner."

[2] Mr M'Cullagh Torrens's "Life of Lord Melbourne," vol. i. p. 120.

he had himself privately sanctioned in Mr Senior's party manifesto in the *Edinburgh Review* was forgotten. He was prepared to propose some modification of the Irish Establishment, chiefly for its proper benefit as an establishment, some security for future improvements made by tenant farmers, if made with the consent of their landlords, and some promotion of Catholic barristers and politicians. Had he done all he proposed it would have merely thwarted the more effectual reforms which came later. And had he offered even these effectual reforms at once, the people of Ireland would have been disgraced in the eyes of Europe if they consented to abandon their claim to a national existence. In truth, the hopes of the Whigs were insensate. If O'Connell proposed the retrograde movement they desired he would have retired, like Dumouriez and Lafayette—leaving his army behind. He could have broken up the National party or rendered it no longer formidable to its enemies; but it was beyond his power to make it take service with the Whigs. The danger, however, was one which might pass away; it would only be precipitated by controversy, and the *Nation* touched it lightly, simply declaring in relation to the sinister rumours that capitulation would be treason. MacNevin, however, to whom political badinage was perpetual sport, wrote that "Whig sympathy at this time was not surprising; there always was an English party who pitied Ireland—the party who were not at the moment profiting by her plunder. Henry II. pitied her under the sword of Strongbow, and there was probably an Irish party in the bodyguard of Jack Cade. Ireland had not been kindled into flames, however, merely to boil the *pot-au-feu* of a few Whig barristers.' If some who have lived in later times, when professions of goodwill to Ireland have been followed by decisive action, should consider these sentiments flippant and ungracious, they shall see by-and-by how the perfervid Whig orators conducted themselves when they returned to office.

The popular feeling in Ireland was divided between indignation at the Chief-Justice and wrath at the jury-packing. Reasonable men were ready to admit that the English Government was entitled to defend itself resolutely against a movement which threatened its existence; but they denied that it was entitled to defend itself by agencies which polluted justice. The feeling against Pennefather was gratified by an unexpected disclosure. Since Municipal Reform, the Corporation of Kilkenny, with all its records, had passed from the control of the Tories to that of the Nationalists, and some angry Nationalist published an opinion

which the Chief-Justice, when a practising barrister twenty years before, had given to the old close corporation. It was necessary to advise a search with a view to infer the non-existence of a certain patent granted by King James before the Revolution of '88, and Mr Pennefather suggested a device for making the search secure which was supposed to throw unexpected light upon other things besides his integrity.

I advise that a person should be produced to prove that he has made search among the Corporation papers, the records at the Rolls or Auditor General's Office, and in the Birmingham Tower, for any anterior patent, and that none such had been found. Good care should be taken to employ some one in the search who has never heard of the Charter of James II., and wherever he goes to search that charter should be kept out of his way.

As this convenient person was required to search the public records of the State, upon whose integrity private rights and national interests depend, the method by which the charter was to be kept out of his way was a secret which would have supplied a valuable clue to the management of public offices in the good old times. It was suggested that it enabled one to surmise by what contrivance the jurors' list had been manipulated. The disinterred opinion moved some moral indignation and a good deal of rhetorical wrath; but no one who knew Ireland felt greatly surprised. It was in this manner the interest of the Undertakers had been conducted since the Revolution. Irish history was elaborately written, and Irish journals were established and maintained to present the affairs of Ireland to the English people with the same ingenious provisions for withholding the truth. In the present day the books from which Englishmen commonly obtain their sole knowledge of Irish transactions are books constructed on the same principle; some one is employed who is ignorant of notorious facts, and keeps his eyes fast closed against patent evidence. An irreverent junior in the Four Courts, suspected of Young Irelandism, capped the Chief-Justice's device by declaring that when he had next occasion to advise a negative search, he would suggest that care should be taken to employ a blind man for the purpose.

Notice was served on the Traversers that they would be called up for judgment on the 19th of April: but the case was not yet ripe for judgment. The Traversers replied by a notice to the Crown that they intended to move for a new trial. The grounds specified in the notice were various, but the most important was misdirection of the jury. For this part of the case they relied on the facts that the Chief-Justice admitted improper evidence; that he misled the jury as to the effect of

the evidence properly admissible; that he stated with strong comments against the Traversers the evidence offered for the Crown, and omitted to make any observation on the evidence favourable to the Traversers, or the inferences which the jury were at liberty to deduce from it; that he read to the jury extracts from the speeches and publications relied on by the Crown, and omitted to read the portions of the same speeches and publications relied on by the Traversers, and that he expressed his opinion on the facts of the case and demeaned himself generally in a manner calculated to control the judgment of the jury and lead them irresistibly to the conclusion that the Traversers were guilty.

These were weighty charges to sustain against a judge in his own court, and all the more so that the Chief-Justice, contrary to general expectation, determined to preside when the motion was heard.

The case for a new trial had been carefully considered in the recess, and was argued with remarkable ability.

The points chiefly insisted upon by counsel will be presently stated in the judgment of the Lords.

The argument lasted nine days, and when it had concluded the Court intimated that it would take time to consider its judgment. The judge who hesitates is supposed to be in the position of a besieged castle which parleys, and rumour immediately declared that the verdict was about to be set aside. The Government Press was fearful that the Traversers would escape, and for a time the Chief-Justice found little mercy at their hands. He was paying the penalty so often exacted from the partisan who lets his zeal outrun his discretion.

When judgment was at length delivered, rumour for a moment seemed to be justified in predicting the collapse of the entire proceedings; for the judges of his own court were not in accord in sustaining the Chief-Justice's law. Mr Justice Perrin on two material points concurred with the Traversers. As respected Mr Tierney's case, the Chief-Justice commented on it in a manner that had misled the jury. He had asked them, were such and such sentiments uttered for the purpose of promoting Christian charity and peace? But that was not the question which the jury had to determine, but whether the Traverser had been guilty of the crime of conspiracy, and guilty to the extent imputed to him in the indictment. The verdict against him ought therefore to be set aside.

Mr Justice Crampton, without adopting every sentence and sentiment of the charge, approved of the manner in which the Chief-Justice had put the evidence against all the Traversers, except Mr Tierney,

but as respects that Traverser he wished that a verdict of acquittal had been returned. He was sorry the attention of the jury was not more pointedly called to his case. The Crown might release him by entering a *nolle prosequi*—if there was no mode of releasing him adopted he could not satisfy his conscience as a judge without declaring that there ought to be a new trial.

Mr Justice Burton thought that a new trial ought to be refused as regarded all the Traversers, including Mr Tierney; and the Chief-Justice was also coerced by a sense of duty to sustain his own charge in all particulars. This was the result of a trial which had lasted from January to May. One of the judges thought the verdict was substantially wrong as respects all the Traversers; another thought it was fatally wrong as respects one of them. Only one judge, and that judge an Englishman, sustained it, apart from the official who was regarded as simply fighting his own battle. The verdict had been obtained by means of a mutilated panel, a packed jury, and, as it now appeared, by means of a charge which half of the Court pronounced to have been illegal. What would the Government do under the circumstances? What the Government did was not very discreet or very magnanimous. They entered a *nolle prosequi* in the case of Mr Tierney, and gave notice to the other Traversers that they would be forthwith called up for judgment on the disputed verdict.

On Thursday morning, the 30th May 1844, the Traversers were called up accordingly. When O'Connell entered the Court a crowded audience welcomed him with peals of applause which could not be repressed, and a large section of the Bar stood up to receive him—a deference ordinarily only paid to judges.

Before sentence was pronounced there was yet another question to be considered, which faction promptly declared to be frivolous and impertinent, but which to-day, under an amended criminal practice, has become a motion of course. The Traversers were about to sue out a writ of error, and counsel moved that whatever judgment the Court might think fit to pass should not commence till a future day, to be fixed at its discretion, so as to enable this appeal to be made before their imprisonment commenced. It was contrary to the principle of law and justice that men should be first punished, and then an inquiry instituted whether the punishment was a legal one. The Court were of opinion that they had no power in criminal cases to make a judgment commence *de futuro*, and the application was refused. But if the Court had no remedy the Crown lawyers had a very simple one; they could

have refrained from calling up the Traversers till the appeal was determined, but they insisted on immediate judgment.

Judge Burton, who had often been O'Connell's competitor, often his associate at the Bar, pronounced sentence.

The object of the Traversers was to obtain a Repeal of the Union by means which he could not say were not violent, for excitement, intimidation, and terror were violent means, but without bloodshed. He believed the principal Traverser had that design rooted in his mind, and that it was by his great influence the country had been preserved from civil war. But he had told the people that if he had found it impossible to succeed he should leave them to themselves; and in case of aggression they would know how to act. The Court, however they might lament it, were bound to consider that exhortations to keep the peace did not take away the character of conspiracy from the proceedings. With respect to the principal Traverser, the sentence of the Court was that he should be imprisoned for twelve months, pay to the Crown a fine of £2000, and give security in £5000, and his personal security in a like amount for his good behaviour for the period of seven years. The sentence of the other Traversers was nine months' imprisonment, a fine of £50, with security for £1000, and their personal security for the same amount for a similar period of good behaviour; all the Traversers to be imprisoned till the recognisance was completed.

Mr Ford could not be restrained from asking in an audible whisper if it was for preserving the country from civil war O'Connell was required to give securities to keep the peace. And O'Connell himself suggested that the judge's opinion seemed to be that his only conspiracy was a conspiracy to prevent an insurrection.

The judge, while he spoke, appeared to be deeply moved; but he was feeble and nervous, and as he had recently sustained the Chief-Justice in his illegal charge, no one regarded his maudlin sympathy; it was a fair trial the Traversers required at his hands, and this they had not found. O'Connell rose and spoke a few words with dignity and self-possession.

"I will not do anything so irregular," he said, "as to reply to the Court, but I am entitled to remind Mr Justice Burton that we each of us have sworn, and that I, in particular, have sworn positively that I was not engaged in any conspiracy whatsoever. I am sorry to say that I feel it my imperative duty to add that justice has not been done to me."

The Junior Bar, with a generous forgetfulness of their interest, received this declaration by raising a thrilling cheer for Repeal of the Union. It was taken up by the audience in the Queen's Bench, echoed in the great Central Hall of the Four Courts, and prolonged by the crowd who lined the quays into the heart of the city. Had Ireland been a country governed by the opinion of its own people, that cheer would have been as

significant and decisive as the cheer of the camp at Hounslow Heath when the seven bishops were acquitted. But Ireland was not in that fortunate position.

Richmond Bridewell, the healthiest of the city prisons, was assigned as the place of duress, and the Traversers were locked up in the sheriff's room till arrangements were completed for their removal. The Hall of the Courts was occupied by a strong body of police, and the State prisoners, as they had now become, passed through a private passage to the rear of the Courts, where carriages were ready to convey them under escort, and by an unexpected and circuitous route, to prison. But these precautions were unnecessary. O'Connell's last act had been to issue an address exhorting the people to keep away from the exciting scene of these transactions. "Let every man," he said, "stay at home. Let the women and children stay at home. Do not crowd the streets, and, in particular, let no one approach the precincts of the 'Four Courts.'" It was impossible that such a command should be literally obeyed, but it was obeyed in spirit. There were considerable crowds round the Courts and the prison, but they were orderly and self-restrained.

N.H.

William S. O'Brien.

CHAPTER IV.

O'CONNELL IN JAIL—YOUNG IRELAND IN CONCILIATION HALL.

O'CONNELL was in jail; and if the Government had locked up the spirit and soul of the national movement in Richmond Penitentiary, they had accomplished one main purpose of the prosecution. But if the spirit and soul were not imprisoned, but remained outside, more determined and dogged than before the trial, able to live apart from the national leader, and destined to outlive him, the purpose was scarcely accomplished. And this is exactly what had happened.

It was necessary to make provision for the management of public business, and by the express desire of O'Connell the leadership was entrusted to Smith O'Brien. It is scarcely possible to conceive a man less like O'Connell than his successor. Grave in demeanour, measured in language, cold in manner, precise and even prim in dress, and possessing neither humour nor popular eloquence, O'Brien had none of the dazzling gifts by which the multitude is accustomed to be wooed. But he was endowed with moral qualities very serviceable to such a cause at such a time—firmness of purpose that neither danger nor ruin could subdue; veracity that made his casual statement as reliable as the sworn testimony of ordinary men; quick and generous sympathy with whatever was noble or true; and under reserved manners the frankness and cordiality of a generous gentleman. He had a remarkable faculty of getting work done, for he was entirely free from jealousy, and took that strenuous interest in the labours of his associates which is the surest bounty to enlist the young. And these qualities were not liable to be disturbed by accidents of temper or fortune. It was admirable to note how speedily a lofty and confident tone was restored to the Association by his unaffected determination never to recede, and a practical aim, by the seasonable proposals which he introduced and carried out. He had been a hardworking member of Parliament for twenty years, and long an active member of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and this training qualified him to carry to another stage the political education of the people. He entered on his task with a systematic industry which men commonly bring only to some personal pursuit. He

conferred daily with the most active minds in the Association, pondered over their consultations, reduced them to agenda, carried them to Richmond Prison for further consultation with O'Connell and his fellow prisoners before any final step was taken, and then worked them out with the minute care a great merchant or banker bestows on the details of his business. During the State Trial he had formed a Parliamentary Committee of the best available men, and this Committee now became the motive power of the organisation. It had proved its capacity by valuable reports on the fiscal relations between Ireland and England, on the parliamentary and municipal franchise, on foreign tariffs, English aggression in India, and other questions of public polity, and it was about to further prove its capacity by fertility of resources and fitness for action as a popular executive. In all this work O'Brien received the same aid from Thomas Davis that Washington got from Alexander Hamilton.

One of the first measures taken was to summon the Repeal members to attend Conciliation Hall instead of the House of Commons, and during the imprisonment the chair was every day taken by a member of Parliament, unless when preference was given to some more conspicuous adherent. Mr Tierney, for example, who had been prosecuted for attending a single meeting, took the chair and renewed his adhesion to the policy and purposes of the movement. Mr Arabin, who was Lord Mayor elect of Dublin, immediately took the chair and identified himself with the national party. The weekly attendance was in excess of the ample accommodation of the new Hall, and the weekly rent exceeded the amount received during the flush of the monster meetings.

It was determined to contest every representative office from that of Town Commissioner upwards; and that it might be done effectually the registry was ordered to be revised, and a staff of barristers and attorneys volunteered to superintend this work. The state of the Parliamentary representation at that time was a public scandal. No general election had taken place since the country was organised, and while more than seven-eighths of the people had declared for Repeal, less than a fifth of the Irish members were Repealers. And some of them were men who brought no moral weight to the cause.[1] O'Brien aimed to increase

[1] Of the 105 Irish members 43 were Tories, 36 Whigs, 7 Federalists, and 19 Repealers. The Repeal members were Daniel O'Connell, Maurice O'Connell, John O'Connell, Sir Valentine Blake, Henry Grattan, James Kelly, Caleb Powell, Edmund Burke Roche, Nicholas Maher, Pierce Somerset Butler, John O'Brien, Mark Blake, Cornelius O'Brien, J. P. Somers, John J. Bodkin, James Power, Hewitt Bridgeman, Robert Dillon Browne, Martin J. Blake, and William Smith O'Brien. The Federalists were D. R. Ross, Thomas Wyse, and Morgan John O'Connell.

the number, but still more to improve the character, of the representation. It may seem a proposition too certain for controversy that a system which rests on opinion and moral suasion must be impaired while its agents are persons in whom it is difficult to place confidence. But the extraordinary belief that a man may be a scamp and even a knave in his private relations, but of steady honour as a representative, found adherents in Ireland. The belief has invariably proved as ill founded as the reliance of a skipper who works his ship with Lascars; they are content with small pay, and yield implicit obedience in quiet times, but at a moment when courage or devotion is required, they fly to the long-boats and hen-coops. That a man of the practical capacity of O'Connell should be indifferent to the character of his adherents is only to be accounted for in one way. What he wanted was implicit obedience, and implicit obedience is a virtue which ordinarily lives alone. The system, no doubt, answered his immediate purpose. Followed into the House of Commons by a retinue of foolish and often disreputable persons, he was a conspicuous figure in public life and a powerful factor in affairs; but it was at the complete sacrifice of a more important purpose. The character of Irish representatives was fatally lowered. The assembly which they were sent to persuade or defy came to regard them as the equivalent in politics to Grub Street in letters. And though there were men of honour and men of capacity among them, it was inevitable in a hostile assembly that they should be judged not by their best but by their worst members. The first remedy O'Brien proposed was to reduce election expenses to a minimum; for men who are expected to use their position in Parliament for public ends ought not to be required to purchase the right of using it. He proposed that by way of example Hely Hutchinson should be elected for Tipperary free of expense. But Mr Hutchinson would not consent to enter Parliament. He then suggested MacNevin.

"I look upon him," he wrote to Davis, "as a man of real genius, with great capacity for public affairs; but as one who wants a great deal of discipline. A couple of years' training in the House of Commons, where he would probably at first encounter many disappointments, would lop off some of his exuberances and chasten his action, which is too theatrical. In the meantime, if he gives himself up to hard solid work, such as his analysis of Kane, ... we will make of him a statesman of whom Ireland will hereafter be proud."[1]

The tone of the public meetings was marked by good sense and

[1] Davis's Papers, Dec. 16, 1844.

self-respect, and by a confidence in ultimate success which was entirely genuine. The Unionist Press resented this tone in a defeated party, and intimated that the Government would shut up Conciliation Hall and prohibit the collection of the Repeal rent. This was a danger which O'Brien was peculiarly fit to encounter. He immediately announced that if such a step were taken he would ask the Association to place him in the chair, and he would try in his own person the legality of this aggression on the right of public meetings. He was not prepared to shed one drop of Irish blood, but he was ready for any extremity of personal endurance in defence of the legal rights of the country, and he knew that there was an honourable emulation among the members of the Committee who should be the next victim in such a struggle. As a daily reminder of his new studies, he resolved not to taste wine or any intoxicating liquor till the Union was repealed, and he invited other Repealers to follow his example. The manner in which he discharged this obligation is very characteristic of the man. Neither the perils of insurrection, the sufferings of a fugitive, the lingering tortures of imprisonment, the tedium of exile, nor the defeat of his cause, could induce him to consider himself released from its obligation.[1]

The tone which animated these proceedings was very welcome to the bulk of the national party. The Repeal Association was in their eyes the true legislature and executive of Ireland, possessing the consent and confidence of the nation from whom all legitimate authority springs; and they longed to have its position reasserted and the highest ground it had reached re-occupied after every attack upon its authority.

Among the men associated with O'Brien in this work Maurice O'Connell and O'Neill Daunt represented the original school of Repealers; Davis, Dillon, MacNevin, Barry, and Richard O'Gorman the new school. O'Gorman was a young barrister, and the representative of a family with whom O'Connell had been at feud since the time of the Catholic Association; but he and his father, a merchant of the class of whom John Keogh was the highest type, thought the imprisonment was an occasion when past differences ought to be forgotten, and they joined the Association. The young men spoke constantly in the public meetings and worked daily with

[1] After his return from Van Diemen's Land to Europe he was induced, under professional advice, to take a little claret for medicinal purposes.

Dublin, 1848.

Richard O'Gorman Jr.

JUDGE O'GORMAN.
New York, 1890.

O'Brien in committee. It was plain that the cause no longer depended on the life of O'Connell, but had a distinct life of its own. Had his death found the national party still united, we may surmise, from the experience of this interregnum, the character it would have maintained. A recruit was admitted into the staff of the *Nation* during these proceedings who deserves to be mentioned. Michael Doheny had been a country schoolmaster, and by native vigour emerged from his humble condition and made himself a barrister in a country, and at a period when the feat was no slight test of power. He had followed O'Connell into all his defunct Associations and through his doubtful alliance with the Whigs. But unlike most of the old agitators, he had preserved his individuality and a certain independence of opinion. In the Committee he was generally found supporting the reforms and developments projected by the young men, and he exhibited a lively desire to be associated with them. At first this desire was by no means reciprocal. He was considerably their senior, his tastes and recreations were different, his appearance was not prepossessing, and more than one of them entertained a vague distrust of him. He has himself stated the case with a modesty and candour which disarm criticism. "I do not know to what circumstances I owe the happiness of their trust and friendship. My habits, my education, my former political associations, disqualified me for such association." But vague objections disappeared before his sincerity and zeal, and he became at length an occasional writer in the *Nation*, and a confederate of Davis and his friends. A curious result followed. In discussion in committee on subjects suddenly arising, he sometimes spoke with admirable vigour and distinctness; in the public meetings, when there was any leisure for preparation, he was always in danger of becoming florid and declamatory; but in his writings, when he could choose his time and subject, he totally abandoned his natural manner and ran into a fantastic imitation of the style of Davis. In Davis, his peculiar style was the result of a powerful imagination lighting up a wide range of knowledge, and the imitation resembled the original (as Mr Carlyle said on a similar occurrence) "as the reflection of a man's face in a dish-cover does." Remonstrance and ridicule, or what he feared more than either, the frequent rejection of his articles, failed to cure him. "My friend," exclaimed MacNevin, "why don't you circulate your sterling native Cronebawns,[1] instead of giving us change for a

[1] Copper coins, named from the mine where the copper was found.

guinea of Davis's in one-and-twenty bad shillings?" But to the end of his life he continued to speak, as a rule, well and naturally, and generally to write ill and artificially.[1] The most practical and persuasive of the young orators was M. J. Barry, and though in the end he lost heart and faith in the cause, it is impossible for anyone who was a daily witness of his life to doubt that he served it at that time *toto corde*, and with an alacrity and industry which he never bestowed on his personal interests.

The discontent excited by the unfair trial was increased by other transactions at this time, in which the Government came into conflict with powerful and sensitive interests. A legal decision in England had taken one of their meeting-houses from the Unitarians, on the ground that it was originally granted to a different sect. If the intention of the founder could be pleaded against long possession, it was a plea which would entitle Catholics to multitudes of churches and glebes throughout the Three Kingdoms; but the Catholics thought it dishonest to disturb the possession of the Unitarians, and they gave them effectual assistance in Parliament and in public meetings in defending their property. The stricter Tories in both Houses, and many orthodox dissenters, passionately resisted any relief; and when an Act was at last obtained securing the property of dissenting congregations who had been twenty years in possession, the Unitarian Synod of Ulster passed a vote of thanks to the Catholics for their assistance in obtaining the settlement. Another legal decision brought into question the validity of Presbyterian marriages, and the wealthy and intelligent dissenters of Ulster took immediate steps to protect themselves. The Government seemed indisposed to help them, and for a time Peel was assailed from Presbyterian pulpits and platforms with a wrath commensurate with the tender interests at stake. The Catholics recognised the injustice and helped the Old Lights as they had helped the New Lights to fight their battle successfully. While the discontent was at its height a few northern Protestants joined the Association. John Mitchell wrote to me at Richmond, announcing Mr John Martin, one of his old school-fellows, as a recruit.

"The Presbyterians here are nearly frantic about the Chapels Bill. Could

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[1] "The Felon's Track" (New York, 1850), from which the extract quoted above is made, is a pamphlet in which Mr Doheny gives some account of his connection with Irish affairs. It contains curious specimens of his original and acquired style, and is a strangely chaotic and incoherent performance.

1844.

Mich Doheny

they not be goaded into throwing up that dirty *Donum* of the devil?[1] At the very least some of them will become Repealers. *Ça ira.* All things tend that way. Some from patriotic motives and some from party ones, some from high, some from shabby ones, will join the conspiracy for Old Ireland. But if there be a single member of the Association that has joined it for the pure love of justice and of his native land, that one is John Martin."[2]

Catholics had also at this time a special complaint against the Government. An Act had lately been passed to regulate charitable bequests, which some ecclesiastics regarded as a new penal law. It forbade lands to be bequeathed by the dying for any charitable or religious object, and it created a board with powers which were regarded by some as deliberately undermining the authority of bishops. And while large sections had these special causes of complaint, the whole community was moved to anger by the discovery that the privacy of the Post-Office was violated. It was ascertained in England that the Home Secretary, Sir James Graham, had caused the letters of Signor Mazzini to be opened and communicated to a foreign Government; and in the Parliamentary inquiry which ensued, it became known that the same system was in full operation in Ireland. Whigs and Tories had alike exercised the odious power—Lord Anglesey, Lord Mulgrave, and Lord Morpeth, when they were idols of the people, as well as Lord de Grey and Sir Edward Sugden in the current year. The letters of sixty persons had been tampered with in Ireland since the Reform Act transferred power from the aristocracy to the middle classes. Thus important interests had recent and special grounds for discontent with the Government.

Among the meetings held universally throughout the country to address the State prisoners, one attracted peculiar attention. For more than a generation Belfast had held aloof from every national organisation; on this occasion men fairly entitled to represent the enterprise and intelligence, as well as the hereditary liberality and hereditary Protestantism of the capital of Ulster, adopted an address of sympathy to O'Connell, which was national in the sense of embracing nearly every opinion in the nation.[3]

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[1] The Regium Donum was a grant by the State to the Presbyterian congregations. It was abolished at the same time as the Irish Establishment, in 1867.

[2] Banbridge, June 14, 1844.

[3] Robert James Tennent, Robert Grimshaw, and Robert M'Dowell took a lead in procuring the adoption of this address. Mr Tennent, a man of remarkable ability, afterwards M.P. for Belfast, was the head of the family whose name Sir Emerson Tennent adopted on his marriage.

"Some of us," said this remarkable document, "are hostile to Repeal of the Union; some of us look upon it as an extreme measure for which the time is not yet come; some of us are in favour of a system of legislation for domestic purposes; and some of us may be numbered among the warmest and most zealous supporters of the principles for which you yourself contend."

Belfast had once been the nurse of Irish liberty. It began to be hoped—for it was then easy to excite hope in Ireland—that she might perhaps return to her early faith.

An address, not intrinsically more important, but which made a profounder impression, emanated from the Catholic aristocracy and gentry of England. It was the more remarkable because they were supposed to have been deficient in gratitude to the Emancipator; and there was a story, which few Irishmen could hear without wrath and scorn, that he had been blackballed in their London Club. On this occasion they employed language of grave and measured censure, which was very impressive. After condemning the policy which had subjected him to prosecution for the hitherto unknown crime of constructive conspiracy, they complained that he should have been tried by a jury of which every member held political and religious opinions opposed to his. A few years earlier such a jury would have convicted him of conspiracy for organising his countrymen to shake off the trammels of religious ascendancy. And they expressed surprise and indignation that a sentence so procured should have been carried out before the legality of the verdict had been fully established. To these statements names were subscribed which in every capital of Europe were recognised as affording a substantial guarantee of their accuracy.

The *Nation* steadily seconded O'Brien, and there was no lowering of tone in the press any more than in the Association. Refraining systematically from personalities of all sorts, it was felt necessary to show no symptoms of shrinking before the truculence of the Queen's Bench. Its doubtful law was not only subjected to unreserved scrutiny, but the partisan judges were treated as history treats Jeffreys and Norbury. A new and costly edition of the "Spirit of the Nation" was published, containing the poem which the Attorney-General had prosecuted, and scores of others of the same character, set to appropriate Irish airs. A collection of leading articles entitled, "The Voice of the Nation," was issued, containing the prosecuted "Morality of War" and essays on the main branches of national polity. The day on which the imprisonment commenced some of the national journals appeared in mourning, but the *Nation*, on the contrary, was printed in green

ink to typify hope and constancy. One contributor, an Englishman, taught the people, in verses which soon became household, that what was pronounced a State crime was in truth a clear and necessary duty :—

> "Conspire ! conspire !
> Singly, ye shall be weak as water,
> Singly, like sheep to slaughter,
> By tyrants evermore you shall be led ;
> Singly ye are as saplings which a breath
> Bends to the earth, a wand broken as soon as bent ;
> Sorrow and shame and death,
> These are the portions sent
> To nations by division rent,
> Therefore conspire."[1]

The doctrine of O'Connell had been scornfully formulated in the Tory Press—"Gather a million of shillings, keep quiet, and then the sky will fall, and you'll catch Repeal." The hope which the *Nation* taught was not an insensate confidence that liberty would come after a certain interval, but the creed that it might be won by commensurate labours and sacrifices, and not at all otherwise. Two weeks after the imprisonment commenced this was the language held :

> We are not men who bid the people to expect Repeal in the change from leaf to fruit in any year. We have never said it was certain. It is not certain ; for if the people do not persevere with a dogged and daily labour for knowledge and independence they will be slaves for generations. It is not at hand, for the Protestants must be in our array, or foreign war must humble our foe. Ireland must be united, or our oppressor in danger, ere we can succeed by moral force ; but we ask those who require knowledge, discipline, and civic wisdom as guarantees for our fitness for nationality —Has not Ireland done something to solve their doubts and satisfy their demands ?

In Parliament, Ministers were invited to contemplate the result of their labours, and twitted with ignominious failure. "You have imprisoned three newspaper proprietors," exclaimed Mr Sheil, "and the Irish Press is as bold and as exciting as it was before. Eleven thousand copies of the *Nation* circulate every week through the country, and administer the strongest provocation to the most enthusiastic spirit of nationality which the highest eloquence in writing can supply."

It is time to turn for a moment to the State prisoners.[2] O'Connell

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[1] S. Dixon in the *Nation* of March 23, 1844.

[2] Of the State prisoners three were Protestants—Gray, Steele, and Barrett ; the others Catholics. These were their ages at that time—O'Connell, 69 ; Steele, 55 ; Barrett, 51 ; Ray, 44 ; John O'Connell, 34 ; Gray, 30 ; and Duffy, 28. By birth they were connected with all the provinces—three of them with Leinster, two with Munster, and one each with Ulster and Connaught.

and his associates were in jail, but the imprisonment, as far as personal inconvenience was anticipated, turned out an agreeable surprise. Richmond Penitentiary is under the control of the Corporation of Dublin, and the Board of Superintendence were not disposed to use their power in an offensive or arbitrary manner against their distinguished countryman. The Governor and Deputy-Governor were authorised to sublet their houses and gardens to the State prisoners; members of Mr O'Connell's family, and of the families of the other prisoners, came to reside with them; they employed their own servants; from the first day presents of venison, game, fish, fruit, and the like began to arrive; and after a little they found themselves established in a pleasant country house, situated in the midst of extensive grounds, bright with fair women and the gambols of children, and furnished with abundant means either for study or amusement. They breakfasted and dined in common, but generally spent the evening apart with their personal friends, each prisoner having a separate sitting-room at his disposal. A gymnasium was set up for exercise, a spacious canvas pavilion erected in one of the gardens for dining in the open air, and each man settled down to some specific work which would occupy the forenoon. O'Connell proposed to write the "History of his Life and Times," and had a collection of the necessary books of reference set on shelves round his study. The journalists did their ordinary work with scarcely any interruption, and some of the other prisoners did a little amateur journalism. During the first month of the imprisonment, John O'Connell and T. M. Ray contributed to the *Nation*, the former his "Repeal Dictionary," afterwards issued in a volume, and the latter a couple of lively political squibs which none of us had expected from the laborious and saturnine secretary.[1] It was whispered that the two youngest prisoners were taking lessons from Moore Stack, a noted teacher of elocution, had foils and masks for fencing, and even horses in one of the great yards for daily exercise. After a little time, a

[1] "Letters from London," one in prose and one in verse. I surmise from the correspondence of the period, rather than remember, that the editor shut up in prison was disposed to take his ease and shirk work. In the middle of the second month Davis writes:—"What will you do with Maddyn's long story? Keep, publish it, or send it back. Have you reviewed the magazines? Mind, I'll not give the Black Cabinet unless you have the magazines done in time. I am just going to write it, and shall not see you, as I dine out to-day; but shall to-morrow. I extirpated the historical error of the 'Stone of Fate from Dathi' (a ballad by Davis) and now defy your criticism thereanent. Can you let me have the 'Invasion'? (a novel by Griffin.)"—Davis to Duffy, July '44.

weekly journal called the *Richmond Gazette*,[1] the circulation of which was strictly limited to one copy in MS., was read aloud after dinner every Friday, and John O'Connell, who was indefatigable as a Master of Revels, projected private theatricals, and got "Julius Cæsar" into rehearsal. No Cassius being forthcoming among the convicted conspirators, he brought from the outer world beyond the walls, his cousin, Maurice Leyne, to undertake the part; and Leyne, then little more than twenty years of age, and as Irish in sympathies and purpose as Robert Emmet, took so heartily to some visitors from the *Nation* office, that he gradually became attracted to the Young Irelanders, and finally cast his fortunes with them for the remainder of his too brief career.

But plans of study and seclusion were interrupted by the stream of visitors. For a time the whole day was occupied in receiving public and private friends, strangers of distinction, and deputations from public bodies. The names of visitors were ordinarily published, and they included all the men of mark in the National party, and many who did not belong to it. At the end of a week it was necessary to subject the stream to some control; a card from O'Connell and the other State prisoners was published in the newspapers announcing that no person

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[1] *The Richmond Gazette* came to an untimely end. It consisted chiefly of squibs and burlesques, the best of which, or at any rate the only one that lingers in my memory, was a gentle pleasantry of John O'Connell's, entitled "The Industrial Resources of Richmond Prison," describing the occupations and amusements of the State prisoners in terms parodied from Dr Kane's famous book then just published. It was edited by the four junior prisoners in turn, and at length one of them, to whom it was no amusement to play at newspapers, when his turn came round inconveniently soon, made the leading article a "Farewell Address," pleading the limited circulation as a legitimate ground for abandoning the undertaking. As the writers had never hesitated to season the articles with a *soupçon* of satire at each other's expense, the farewell address, in thanking the contributors, ventured also to thank Mr Barrett for not having contributed, as this fortunate circumstance enabled the editors to declare that they had not published a line which, dying, they would wish to blot. Perhaps some of the other follies of the time ought not to be altogether omitted. Tom Steele, in a sportive mood, named a hillock in one of the gardens "Tara," and a bench in the other "Mullaghmast," and exhibited his playthings to visitors with the grave enjoyment of Uncle Toby. It was his high jinks to defend Tara, with half a dozen picked men, against Edmund Burke Roche and an equal following; and the man approaching sixty, who was endowed with enormous strength, held his own against the young squire in the flower of manhood. In the evening, when O'Connell and the students had retired, there was a "sederunt," it was understood, over pipes, where Steele and Barrett presided, and about which it was the sport of the prisoners to indulge in pleasant exaggerations. Describing the imprisonment at some social meeting afterwards, Mr Barrett said, "It was a happy time, that rustication in Richmond, for we had leisure to drink (hear, hear, and ironical cheers from his late fellow-prisoners), we had leisure to drink wisdom and experience from the lips of the Liberator."

would be admitted any day before twelve or after four o'clock, or admitted at all on Monday or Wednesday. Our immediate political associates came every day, and the dinner-table was never set for less than thirty persons. O'Connell was a genial and attentive host, full of anecdote and *badinage* while the ladies remained, and ready, when they withdrew, for serious political conference or the pleasant carte and tierce of friendly controversy. An artist's studio and a daguerrotypist's camera were set up within the precincts to multiply likenesses of the prisoners, and the caricaturists made more amusing ones without the trouble of a sitting.[1]

This sort of imprisonment scandalised pedants and bigots; and the Lord Lieutenant in the third week ordered that admission should be subject to rules, and that deputations should not be received in any case. Deputations had already arrived in town whose names filled columns of the daily papers, and one morning a procession of civic functionaries in their robes of office presented themselves at the gates. They were informed by the governor that their reception as a deputation was forbidden, and they proceeded to O'Connell's residence in Merrion Square, where they were received by Maurice O'Connell on the part of his father, and afterwards came individually and unofficially to pay their respects to the prisoners. The distinction was not worth much, but it seemed to have satisfied the scruples of the Government. Next day a meeting was held at the Mansion House, when a municipal declaration was adopted, condemning the conduct of the State trials, and claiming for Ireland a fair share in her own government. It was sent for signature to every municipal body in Ireland, and Londonderry united with Limerick, and Armagh and Newry with Clonmel and Kilkenny, in furnishing adherents to it. In the end it received five hundred and sixty signatures of elected representatives of the people.

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[1] There was a portrait of O'Connell engraved from a miniature of Carrick published at this time, which represents with great fidelity what he was at the era of the imprisonment. It exhibits a man of vigorous frame and commanding countenance, both, however, depressed by age and beginning to be marked by decrepitude. He sat in Richmond to a young artist named N. J. Crowley, then rising into notice, who produced an ideal O'Connell, a tribune in the height of his vigour and inspiration, bearing only a distant and fanciful resemblance to the original. This portrait became the property of Dr Gray. The same artist painted the editor of the *Nation*, and felt bound to bestow upon him a dreamy, poetic head which might have passed for Shelley's—a grave nature had denied him; and the achievement gave rise to a *mot* by O'Connell which is worth recording. "Is not that very like Duffy?" Crowley demanded, producing the head in question for the inspection of O'Connell. "Hem," said O'Connell, looking from the portrait to the original, "I wish Duffy was very like that."

Though the convicted conspirators took their imprisonment gaily, it moved the gravest indignation of the country and of other countries. The Catholic bishops framed a form of prayer beseeching God that grace might be granted to O'Connell to bear his trials with resignation, and that he might be soon restored to liberty for the guidance and protection of the people. A special prayer-book containing this prayer was printed and obtained a large circulation. Catholic colleges in France and Germany sent addresses to the man who was familiar to them as the Catholic champion, reminding him how blessed were they who suffered persecution for righteousness' sake; and the Belgian and Rhenish journals brought news that prayers for his deliverance were offered in the churches from Ostend to Dusseldorf.

The relation of the prisoners to the Association and the newspapers was not in any manner disturbed, and an open communication with the political world was maintained by means of a weekly bulletin read in the Association by O'Connell's youngest son and namesake, then barely arrived at manhood. At first it merely announced that his father and the other prisoners were in good health, and by degrees it grew into something like a brief review of the public affairs of the week, and there was no attempt or desire to conceal further than was necessary by the regulations of the Penitentiary that the voice from the prison was the voice of O'Connell.

I have always regarded the Richmond imprisonment as subject to the rules which protect the privacy of domestic life. The State prisoners were in effect a household, of which O'Connell was the head; and though the most searching criticism could find little with which to reproach him or them, a narrative of their familiar talk and everyday life, especially of the familiar talk of the historic prisoner on his own hearthstone, is not, I think, permissible. The incidents which may properly be described are incidents which were designed to have some public result. After the imprisonment had lasted a few weeks, the Government Press[1] suggested that the prisoners might, as an act of grace, be discharged from custody, with the exception of O'Connell. But his associates, who were not disposed to avail themselves of this somewhat contemptuous lenity, adopted a resolution declaring that they would reject any proposal of this nature; that, on the contrary, as they were fully identified with O'Connell in the proceedings for which he was assailed, they would not pay the fines imposed by their sentence,

[1] The *Morning Herald* and *Standard*.

or enter into the recognisances required until his imprisonment had expired.

But there was another influence to which they would gladly have owed their deliverance. The foreign policy of Ireland, which seemed a dream for twelve months before, was now an important factor in controlling the policy of the Empire. A quarrel was ripening between France and England. The Democratic Press of Paris and the Parliamentary Opposition were eager for war, and war seemed imminent. But in the temper of Ireland that country at lowest would be closed as a recruiting field, and it might well be that France would find active allies there. O'Connell felt persuaded that Peel would not declare war without unconditionally releasing the State prisoners, and a man so skilled in foreign politics as Lord Palmerston arrived at a similar conclusion.[1] The foreign quarrel had two branches. Prince de Joinville, who was an admiral in his father's service, had recently published a pamphlet to demonstrate that the Navy of France was at length in a condition to cope with the Navy of England. And this exasperating *brochure* was followed by aggressions in the Mediterranean which, while they were only in contemplation, the English Press described as too offensive to the honour and too injurious to the interests of the Empire to be permitted. The case was this: The French Government had a dispute with Morocco, and it seemed probable that they would seize that country and colonise it, as they had seized and colonised Algiers; but Gibraltar draws its supplies in part from Morocco, and would be nearly worthless as a fortress if two coasts of the Mediterranean were occupied by France. Another dispute was long smouldering in the Southern Ocean, originating in the pretensions of an English Consul, named Pritchard, to direct the policy of Queen Pomare of Tahiti, after she had placed herself under the protection of France. News at length came that Prince de Joinville was bombarding Tangiers, and it was said he would blow down the walls of Richmond by the same operation.[2] After Tangiers, Mogador

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[1] "There is a talk of the Queen going to Ireland in September, and it is said that O'Connell is to be let out to smoothe the way for her visit. I suppose that now that the Government have been compelled to look at a war with France as a possible contingency, they think they may as well turn over a new leaf in regard to Ireland, and try what conciliation will do for them in that country."—Lord Palmerston to his brother, 1844. Lord Dalling's "Life of Palmerston."

[2] There hung in the dining-room a map of the Mediterranean, on which the State prisoners followed the story of the expedition. O'Connell wrote on it: "On this map I watched the progress of the French armies and navy during our unjust captivity, and I present it on the 5th September 1844, the closing day of that

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THE TRAVERSERS OF 1844.
(*From a large Italian Lithograph.*)

was bombarded; but England did not interfere except to counsel the Emperor of Morocco to concede all that the French Government demanded. In Tahiti, where Pritchard had, in the language of Sir Robert Peel, been subjected to a "gross outrage accompanied by gross indignity," a thousand pounds were accepted as an adequate *solatium* for his wounded honour and the wounded honour of his country, and the contest was declared to be at an end. Sir Robert Peel and his colleagues were angrily assailed for having truckled to France, and they had no good answer to make. In truth, England was beginning to practise the foreign policy in which she has since made such notable progress; for to shrink from foreign war was the necessary complement of her defiance of the Irish people.

Books upon the history and condition of Ireland were now published in France, Prussia, and Belgium, and portraits of the conspirators were to be found in every town and village between the Atlantic and the Pacific, and in every city on the Continent of Europe. More than a quarter of a century later, when these transactions were nearly forgotten by a new generation in Ireland, I was startled to find for sale under one of the piazzas of Turin a large lithograph designated "Capi e Promotori della Questione Irelandese"—being no other than the convicted conspirators of 1844.[1]

The Association, in pursuance of its new policy, offered a prize for the best essay on a constitution for Ireland, and exhorted competitors to remember that "the difficulties of the case must not be evaded, but frankly stated, and the means specified by which they might be best met." There were three hundred Repeal reading-rooms in existence, and it was resolved to increase them to three thousand, and to make them centres of organisation and union. Education had long been a luxury forbidden under heavy penalties. In later times it was an instrument of proselytism; it was determined to turn it into an effectual weapon of defence. The Celtic race, though obstinate in its habits, is very susceptible of discipline; no peasant is so easily transformed into a soldier; no peasant girl so speedily acquires ease and intelligence by living among the cultivated classes. The enthusiasm of the time which had enabled an entire nation to become water-

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captivity, to my valued and cherished friend, Charles Gavan Duffy, one of the successful Traversers."—Daniel O'Connell, M.P. for the County of Cork, Richmond Bridewell. (This map is now in the Melbourne Museum, of which I am one of the Trustees.)

[1] Reproduced on the opposite page.

drinkers would, it was hoped, enable them to submit to other discipline and other sacrifices. It was admirable to see how young men of all ranks entered into this idea. Townsmen took up the defence of farmers, who were unable to assert themselves before a landlord armed with a merciless code; the ancient seats of piety and learning had been wantonly desecrated as granaries, cattle-sheds, and ball-courts, or as quarries for the neighbouring squire or parson; and young peasants volunteered to become their guardians till the time arrived when a National Government would take them in charge. This progress was obvious; but there was progress more important which could not be measured. Davis possessed the rare faculty of exciting impatience of wrong without awakening the deadly hatred of those who profit by it; and it was only in after years men came to know how deeply the new ideas penetrated among cultivated Protestants. Joseph Le Fanu was the literary leader of the young Conservatives, and Isaac Butt their political leader; both were at this time engaged, privately and unknown to each other, in writing historical romances which would present the hereditary feuds of Catholics and Protestants in a juster light to their posterity. Their books were published anonymously, and not for some years after they were begun; but I can state, on their authority respectively, that they had constantly in view in pursuing their task to gratify the new sentiment which the *Nation* had awakened.[1] Samuel Ferguson, more essentially a man of letters and more indisputably a man of genius than either, broke through the hostile silence of the *Dublin University Magazine* by predicting with generous exaggeration that, if no untoward event interrupted their career, the time would come when the national writers in Dublin would be read with something of the same enthusiasm in Paris as men in Dublin were reading Béranger and Lamartine. Mr Lever, who winced under contemptuous criticism in the *Nation* (for the young men rejected his drunken squires and riotous dragoons as types of the Irish character), could not altogether resist the same sentiment; his historical stories took a tone so national that his cautious Scotch publisher demanded if he was "Repealising like the rest."[2] Even in Ulster, the home of prejudice in later times, they had reason to know that their songs found favour, and, like Moore's, were heard in unwonted places.[3] And in the stronghold of

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[1] The romances in question were "Torlogh O'Brien," a story of the wars of King James, by Le Fanu; and "The Gap of Barnesmore," by Butt.

[2] Fitzpatrick's "Life of Charles Lever."

[3] "I am passionately fond of the old Irish melodies, and have long been picking them

bigotry, in the office of the *Evening Mail*, at the feet of the astute parson who directed its politics, there was growing up a lad who in a few years broke away from hereditary prejudice to become the laureate of Irish treason.[1]

History and historical poetry, which elsewhere are the food of patriotism, were wholly excluded from public teaching in Ireland, and it was well entitled to be regarded as a notable event when professors of Trinity College and professors of Maynooth, Protestant and Catholic clergymen, Conservative and National barristers and journalists, were seen side by side in the Rotundo while Moore Stack recited ballads and speeches alternately from the classics of Irish literature and the recent writings in the *Nation*.[2] A little later a similar combination took place on behalf of the widow of John Banim, a writer intensely national in his scope and spirit, and whose name at an earlier period would certainly have frightened away Conservatives. A committee, selected alternately of Repealers and Conservatives or Whigs, was organised to purchase her an annuity, but was relieved from the duty by the frank concession of a pension by Sir Robert Peel, impressed perhaps by the unprecedented phenomenon of such a combination.[3] Society, which in Dublin was like a British camp, began to open its doors to the young orators and

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up wherever I could find them. Indeed, I was familiar with most of the airs in Moore before his Melodies were heard of. My father had an enormous store of old scraps of this kind, and when a child he used to sing them to me in Irish. You would hardly expect this from an old black-mouthed Presbyterian." — James M'Knight, LL.D., Editor of the *Belfast News-Letter*, to C. G. Duffy. "These ballads make their way even into the barracks, and generally into the public-houses frequented by our Irish soldiers. They are full of fire, and the writers cannot be ordinary men. We therefore call attention to them, and trust all officers will exert a salutary vigilance over any attempts to introduce them into the army."—*Naval and Military Gazette.*

[1] "Myles O'Reilly" was the *nom de plume* in the Irish American Press of Charles G. Halpine, whose father was editor of the *Mail* during the State trial.

[2] Moore Stack was the gifted actor who, under the stage name of Moore, interpreted the latest creations of Sheridan Knowles and Leigh Hunt in Covent Garden, till religious scruples induced him to retire from the stage.

[3] The names of the committee deserve to be recorded :—Daniel O'Connell, M.P., John Anster, LL.D. (the translator of "Faust"), Smith O'Brien, M.P., Isaac Butt, LL.D. (then leader of the extreme Conservatives), Dr Kane (afterwards Sir Robert Kane), John O'Connell, M.P., Charles Lever (the author of "Harry Lorrequer") Torrens M'Cullagh, LL.B. (later M'Cullagh Torrens, M.P.), Thomas Davis, Samuel Ferguson (afterwards Sir Samuel Ferguson, Deputy-Keeper of the Records in Ireland), Thomas O'Hagan (who became Lord O'Hagan), William Carleton (author of "Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry"), E. B. Roche, M.P. (since Lord Fermoy), Joseph Le Fanu (author of "The House by the Churchyard," etc.), Charles Gavan Duffy, Hubert Smith, M.R.I.A., Thomas MacNevin, Dr Maunsell (editor of the *Evening Mail*), Gray Porter, James M'Glashan (proprietor of the *Dublin University Magazine*), and M. J. Barry.

poets, and the "Songs of the Nation" were heard in drawing-rooms where nationality had never penetrated since the Union, except in the disguise of Moore's Melodies. Good old Tories shook their heads and predicted perilous consequences. There was a story of a dowager who, after one of the national songs, gathered her flock and carried them off in a pretended panic, crying, "Come away, my dears, before we are piked out."

The writing of the *Nation* was chiefly done by those who founded the journal, but the occasional contributors at this time show how widely sympathy had spread. Among them were William Carleton and John Fisher Murray, habitual writers in the Conservative periodicals. Carleton, long lost to the race from which he sprang, had caught fire from the society of the young men, and renounced his bigotry for ever. Among them also were others doubly welcome as the heirs of historic names in Ireland. It stirs the heart to hear how the descendants of William Wallace fostered the genius and fortunes of Robert Burns; and there are some who will not read unmoved that the son of Dr Drennan, the patriot poet of '98, the grandson of John Keogh, the Catholic leader of that era, O'Reilly of Breffni, the representative of James II.'s Irish Chancellor, and the son of MacDermott, still known in Ireland as Prince of Coolavin, came to the aid of the founders of the *Nation*. It was justly regarded as a fact of significance that an Irish Society for the purpose of social and intellectual intercourse between Irishmen, irrespective of political or religious differences, was established in London at this time, in which might be found, side by side (in its prospectus at any rate), men hitherto so hostile in party conflict as the Marquis of Londonderry and the Marquis of Clanricarde, Lord Castlereagh and Lord Rossmore, Frederick Shaw and Anthony Blake, Emerson Tennent and D. R. Pigot, W. H. Gregory and Morgan John O'Connell; representatives of literature and art like Dr Croly and Fr. Prout, Maclise and M'Dowell; such recruiting sergeants of hostile forces as Captain Taylor and Dr Cooke Taylor; John Doyle, who was delighting London by bantering all parties indiscriminately in his H. B. sketches, and young lawyers who were writing in the *Nation* and lecturing in Repeal reading-rooms.[1] The Irish cause had not changed

[1] It consisted mainly however of two political parties, according to one of the principal Conservatives engaged in organising it. Mr Emerson Tennant wrote to me—"It goes on charmingly, and is a real national reunion. But who are its members? They are as nearly as possible one-half high Tories and Conservatives—and one-half Repealers. But a single Whig never crossed its threshold. Though urged, entreated, and implored, they won't do it."

its purpose but only its agencies; the clamour of monster meetings was replaced by a power as silent as electricity.

The modified character of the national movement did not long escape comment. *Tait's Magazine*, which spoke with authority in those days, regarded it as "far more formidable and menacing than during the era of the monster meetings. The Repealers were doing a more dangerous thing now than reviling the Saxons: they are imitating them, educating themselves and one another into a most Saxon sturdiness of purpose and persistency of action."

In the *Tablet*, Frederick Lucas, who afterwards proved himself to possess rare powers of political organisation, judged it in the same manner.

> "Never," he said, "were both the leaders and the led more deeply in earnest or more assiduous in their labours. The contest had become less noisy, and this deceives the vulgar, but it has in exactly the same proportion become more real, more true (shall we say it?), more honest, and more respectable. It has now become a recognised fact that the struggle for Repeal may be a long one; and all parties are girding themselves up for that march through the wilderness which is to prepare them for the possession of the promised land. . . . And in the meantime the years of pilgrimage will not be wasted. They will be spent in earnest, anxious, painful efforts to acquire knowledge and discipline, and every spiritual, moral, and intellectual quality which can accomplish and adorn freedom."

The *Evening Packet*, the most violent of the Government journals in Ireland, shrieked out that no device of treason hitherto invented had proved so mischievous as the Reading-rooms were destined to become, and that the moderation of the leaders was a mask for the worst purposes.

But the men who had designed this policy knew better than their opponents to how many dangers it was liable. A Celtic people will make great immediate sacrifices and endure the extremity of ruin for a cause they love. They will return again and again to a purpose with clinging but fitful devotion; but they do not willingly settle down into the patient pursuit of an end which is confessedly distant and even doubtful. And they are easily turned aside by novelty.

Mr John O'Connell, who regarded the succession to the popular tribunate as his entailed estate, and did not look with equanimity on possible competitors, was the first to demur. An incident which might have led to disastrous consequences was attributed—rightly, I am persuaded—to his occult influence. Mr Dillon Browne, a type of the Irish member who disgraced the Irish cause, made a speech in Con-

ciliation Hall in the absence of O'Brien, hostile to the policy which the Association was working out with so much care. Mr Browne's speech was a matter of no importance, but, when he had concluded, Mr Daniel O'Connell, junior, moved a vote of thanks to him for his well-timed counsel, and the *Pilot* in its next issue applauded this judicious recognition of public merit. No one believed that a timid young man, who had hitherto not got beyond reading his father's weekly bulletin, would have ventured on this step on his own responsibility, or that Mr Barret would have applauded an irregular proceeding without authority. Davis was deeply moved, less by the incident than by the disposition and design which seemed to lie under it. He wrote to O'Brien, then in the country, like a man who was stunned by a sudden blow.

"When you write to Richmond notice the fact that Mr O'Connell's son moved a vote of thanks to Mr Dillon Browne without the consent of the Committee, and did so because of Mr Browne's opposition to the Charities Bill, which in its present form a majority of the Committee approved. What is worse, he did so after Mr Browne had made a speech adverse to our whole policy, attacking the Federalists, calling on the people to turn them out, and this because they did not aid his opposition to a useful measure. I have made up my mind if such conduct be repeated to withdraw silently from the Association. . . . There are higher things than politics, and I never will sacrifice my self-respect to them."[1]

Davis, who never shrank from enemies in the front, threatened secession in his disgust at being hamstrung from behind; but to such a man secession in any other sense than changing the nature of his labours was impossible. O'Brien was disposed to treat the matter lightly. In his reply he recommends patience and forbearance, and indeed sermonised generally on the necessity of self-restraint in a manner very trying to a man who was not in the least thinking of himself, but solely of the public cause.[2] The offence was repeated in the *Pilot* in terms which argued a set purpose, and some explanation why conflicting counsel was offered to the people was becoming urgent.[3] Events, however, were at hand which swept the transaction into obscurity.

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[1] Cahermoyle Correspondence.—Davis to O'Brien, August 20, 1844.

[2] Davis Papers.—O'Brien to Davis.

[3] "There was a disgusting article in the *Pilot* last night; one which, I think, Barrett would never have dared to write without the knowledge of his masters. It must be dealt with one way or the other; and I wish you would come out as early as you can in the morning to talk it over. I think it desirable to have O'Connell discountenance, or countenance it, whichever he chooses, that we may deal with it accordingly. The gist of it is an attempt to stop the Repeal Reading-rooms."—Duffy to Davis. Richmond Prison. Davis Papers.

CHAPTER V.

THE IRISH PRISONERS BEFORE THE HOUSE OF LORDS: THEIR DELIVERANCE.

We must now turn to the story of the appeal against the judgment of the Queen's Bench. In October the writ of error was opened before the House of Lords by counsel for the Traversers. An appeal to the Lords seemed an expedient so desperate that for a time no one believed it was seriously contemplated. A man so skilled in gauging public opinion as Lord Palmerston thought that the prepossession of the Court could scarcely be overcome. "The case in favour of O'Connell," he wrote to his brother, "must be strong indeed if the decision is given in his favour. The Court will certainly be against him."[1] But eminent English counsel insisted that there was a case which was irresistible, and it was resolved to make the experiment. It was Chief-Justice Pennefather and his learned brethren, and the Irish Law Officers who were now upon trial. The Chief-Justice's abnormal charge did not fall within the review of a court of error, which can only deal with matters on the record; but of the matters on the record everything essential to a fair trial was called in question, as tainted with error or malice. The offence for which the Traversers were tried was not, it was contended, legally charged in the indictment. The jury which tried them was not a lawful jury of the country. The verdict which the jury found was not a legal verdict. And the judgment of the Court, as entered on the record, was bad in law and ought not to stand.

The counsel in the case succeeded in the hard task of disentangling these grave objections from legal technicalities, and making them intelligible and of vivid interest to the whole community.[2]

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[1] Lord Palmerston to his brother, June 5, '44.—Lord Dalling's "Life of Palmerston."

[2] The counsel for the Traversers before the Lords were Sir Thomas Wilde and Messrs Peacock Hill and Fitzroy Kelly, the late Chief Baron. The Crown was represented by Sir William Follett, the English Attorney-General, and Mr Smith, the Irish Attorney-General. Sir Frederick Pollock, who had advised the Crown in the early part of the case, was now a Judge. To Mr Peacock is attributed the credit of having hit the chief blot in the indictment.

The offence was not legally charged: some of the counts in the indictment were so framed as to disclose no offence. For example, the counts charging the defendants with conspiring to exercise intimidation did not specify the persons whom they intended to intimidate. These, in the pleader's language, were "bad for generality." Some counts set forth several distinct conspiracies, when only one conspiracy could be properly charged. These, in the same language, were "bad for duplicity." All the counts were perhaps bad, but if one was bad it was contended that the judgment could not be sustained.

The jury was not a legal jury of the country: it was taken from a spurious list, and the opportunity of correcting this spurious list had been denied.

The verdict was not a legal verdict: there were findings upon more offences than were charged in the indictment or pleaded to by the defendants. Three of the defendants were found guilty of all the five charges set out in the counts, seven of them were found guilty of three of these charges, and eight were found guilty of one of them. But the very essence of criminal conspiracy was one common object, and one object common to all. If there was a conspiracy, say of three out of the eight, for an object different from the object of the eight, it could not in law or in justice be dealt with as one conspiracy. The charge was conspiracy, and a man must be acquitted or convicted of it; it could not be divided into two or three parts. The jury were sworn to try one issue, and they had found on no less than three distinct issues.

The judgment of the Court was bad: in one respect the sentence was clearly unlawful, as the defendants were to be detained in prison not only until each of them paid his own fine and entered into his own recognisances, but till all the others had paid their fines and entered into their recognisances also. The indictment contained six distinct charges, each of which, if proved, aggravated the guilt; and the sentence was "for the aforesaid offences." But if the verdict on any count was bad, the Traverser must necessarily have been sentenced for an offence of which he was not legally convicted. On these grounds it was submitted that the judgment of the Queen's Bench in Ireland ought to be reversed.

It is customary for the House of Lords in important appeals to ask the assistance of the English Judges, and a number of questions were framed to elicit the opinions of these learned persons upon the main points of the case. On a day appointed answers were read by the Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas[1] on behalf of the majority of his brethren.

In reply to a question, whether all or any of the counts were bad in law, they stated that the sixth and seventh counts were clearly bad, as they failed to specify with sufficient certainty the illegal purpose of the agreement entered into between the defendants. It was left in complete doubt whether the "intimidation" charged was to be directed against the peaceable inhabitants of the surrounding places, against the subjects of the Queen dwelling in Ireland in general, or against persons in the exercise of public authority.

[1] Chief-Justice Tindal.

In answer to a question whether there were any defects in the finding of the jury, the Judges were of opinion that the finding on the first, second, third, and fourth counts were not supportable in law, as they found the defendants guilty of several conspiracies on counts where only one conspiracy was charged. In reply to a question whether there was any sufficient ground for reversing the judgment on account of defects in the indictment, or in the finding of the jury, the majority of the Judges were of opinion that if the finding was good on one count, the judgment could not be reversed on the ground that the finding on other counts was bad. The judgment in the present case might be supported on the good counts. With respect to the Court in Dublin disallowing the challenge of the array, the Judges did not think this decision furnished a ground for reversing the judgment; for though it was stated that no less than seventy-nine names were omitted from the jurors' list, no unindifferency on the part of the sheriff was alleged, and this was the only ground allowed by law for a challenge of the array. They were of opinion therefore that the judgment of the Queen's Bench in Ireland ought to be confirmed.

But this conclusion, which fitted so imperfectly the premisses from which it was derived, had not the unanimous assent of the Judges. Baron Parke, whose reputation as a lawyer stood high, and Mr Justice Coltman thought the judgment ought to be reversed for reasons which still seem irresistible. There were confessedly defects in the indictment, defects in the finding of the jury, and defects in the verdict. Two counts of the indictment were bad, the finding of the jury on three other counts was bad, and the judgment passed on the defendants was that for "the offences aforesaid" they should be fined and imprisoned. It could not be known how much of the punishment was awarded for offences of which the parties were not legally convicted; how under such circumstances could the punishment be inflicted? For these reasons they were compelled to think that the judgment of the Irish Court ought to be reversed.

After the opinions of the Judges were read an adjournment took place, and there was a general impression that the case was practically decided. Lawyers and publicists did not hesitate to declare that it was contrary to a fundamental principle of English law to admit the existence of serious wrongs for which there was no remedy; but it was assumed that the opinion of the majority of the Judges in Westminster Hall, whether right or wrong, would be accepted by the Court of Appeal.

On the 4th of September, when the Traversers had been more than three months in Richmond Bridewell, the House of Lords met to determine whether or not they could be legally imprisoned. Such a question might seem fit only for the tribunals of Laputa: and the Court was constituted in a manner which would have suggested new illustra-

tions of human folly to the cynical genius of Swift. It consisted of Lord Lyndhurst, Chief Law Adviser of the Government which would be defeated and humiliated by the reversal of the judgment; of Lord Brougham, who was the fierce and implacable enemy of O'Connell, from whom indeed he had received intolerable provocation; of Lord Cottenham, ex-Whig Chancellor, who had political interests in the result diametrically opposed to those of Lord Lyndhurst; and of Lord Campbell, ex-Whig Chancellor in Ireland, who owed his promotion in part to the patronage of the chief prisoner. The Lord Chief-Justice of the Queen's Bench, Lord Denman, who had been Brougham's colleague in the defence of Queen Caroline a quarter of a century earlier, completed the Court, and was perhaps as unbiassed by interest or sympathy as it is possible to find a man who is an active member of a political assembly in a free country.

The Lord Chancellor opened the business by moving that the judgment of the Court below be affirmed. An anxious observer of the proceedings on behalf of the Traversers described his manner on the occasion as dignified and impressive, and his voice as singularly penetrating and persuasive. But his speech would have furnished materials as suitable for the satire of Swift as the composition of the Court. It was an intrepid attempt to cheat the Traversers out of their legal rights. If there were any bad counts in the indictment, it did not by any means follow, he conceived, that the Court in Dublin in passing sentence had assigned any part of the punishment in respect to these counts. The contrary indeed might be inferred. With respect to the challenge of the array, all the Judges were of opinion that the decision of the Irish Court on that application was right. But was the case of an imperfect jurors' list therefore a case without a remedy? Undoubtedly not; an appeal to the House of Lords, however, was not the remedy which the law provided. What the remedy might be was not before their lordships; enough that it was not a writ of error. It was clear to him under these circumstances that the judgment of the Court below ought to be sustained.

Lord Brougham was willing to admit the technical informality of some counts, but was of opinion, nevertheless, that the judgment must stand. The question was, whether they would take the law from seven judges or from two. With respect to the challenge of the array, there had been no authority cited to show that there was any legal ground for such a proceeding.

Lord Denman replied on his noble friends with fatal effect. He began with the challenge of the array. If such practices as had prevailed in the present instance should continue, trial by jury in Ireland would become a mockery, a delusion, and a snare. The ground of challenge was that there was in fact no Jurors' Book for 1843 in existence. After the Recorder had determined in his judicial character what should constitute the list of jurors, somebody else had said, "That shall not be the jury list; this shall be it," substituting a list of his own. If this person had added sixty unauthorised names instead of subtracting sixty which were sanctioned, was there to be no remedy? Had the law been complied with, the twelve jurors who tried the

case might all have been shut out of the panel; the jury might have been taken wholly from the names improperly omitted. One of the learned Judges in Dublin was of opinion that the challenge should have been allowed, and with that opinion he entirely concurred. There was a confessed and serious wrong, and the only question was whether a challenge of the array was the proper remedy. If not, what was the remedy? The Lord Chancellor affirmed that the party was not without a remedy, but he had omitted to state what it was. If it could not be specified, what security was there for the Queen's subjects? The remedy was the challenge of the array, and no other; it ought to have been allowed; and not having been allowed the trial had erroneously proceeded.

With respect to the judgment, they were told they ought to assume that it was pronounced on the good counts only; but such a presumption would be in direct contradiction to a notorious fact. The sixth and seventh counts were now held to be bad; but the Judges in Dublin after argument had declared them to be good. The judgment was pronounced on all the counts; on counts stating no offence, and on other counts stating offences on which there had been erroneous findings; and therefore the judgment had been improperly passed. It was his duty under these circumstances to vote against the motion of the Lord Chancellor.

Lord Cottenham deplored the difficulty in which he was placed in differing from the majority of the judges, but having carefully weighed all that was said, he was driven to the conclusion that the opinion of the minority was right.

Lord Campbell, who, as Junior Law Lord, spoke last, broke new ground. He had been much struck with the objection to the validity of the judgment by reason of the form of the recognisances into which the defendants were required to enter. It might lead to perpetual imprisonment, for, if the required sureties were not found in the case of any one prisoner, they might all remain in custody for the rest of their lives. Adverting to another point, the bad counts contained the most serious charges in the indictment, including those for creating disaffection in the army; could their lordships concur in the incredible fiction that the Judges, in awarding punishment, had overlooked these grave charges? If they could not, the judgment was necessarily bad.

The Lord Chancellor then put the question—"Is it your lordships' pleasure that the judgment be reversed?" and the Law Lords having voted in accordance with their speeches, three declared themselves content, two non-content. It cannot fail to be noted that these eminent jurists voted as they would have done in a purely party division; but it has since been generally held that the decision was strictly in accordance with law.

In sitting as a Court of Appeal it is the practice of the House of Lords to leave the decision exclusively to peers who have held judicial office. The interest of the present case had attracted a number of lay peers, who, seeing that the decision was about to be unfavourable to their personal wishes, insisted on their right of voting. Lord Hawarden, the landlord who had cleared out his Tipperary estates as he might a rabbit-

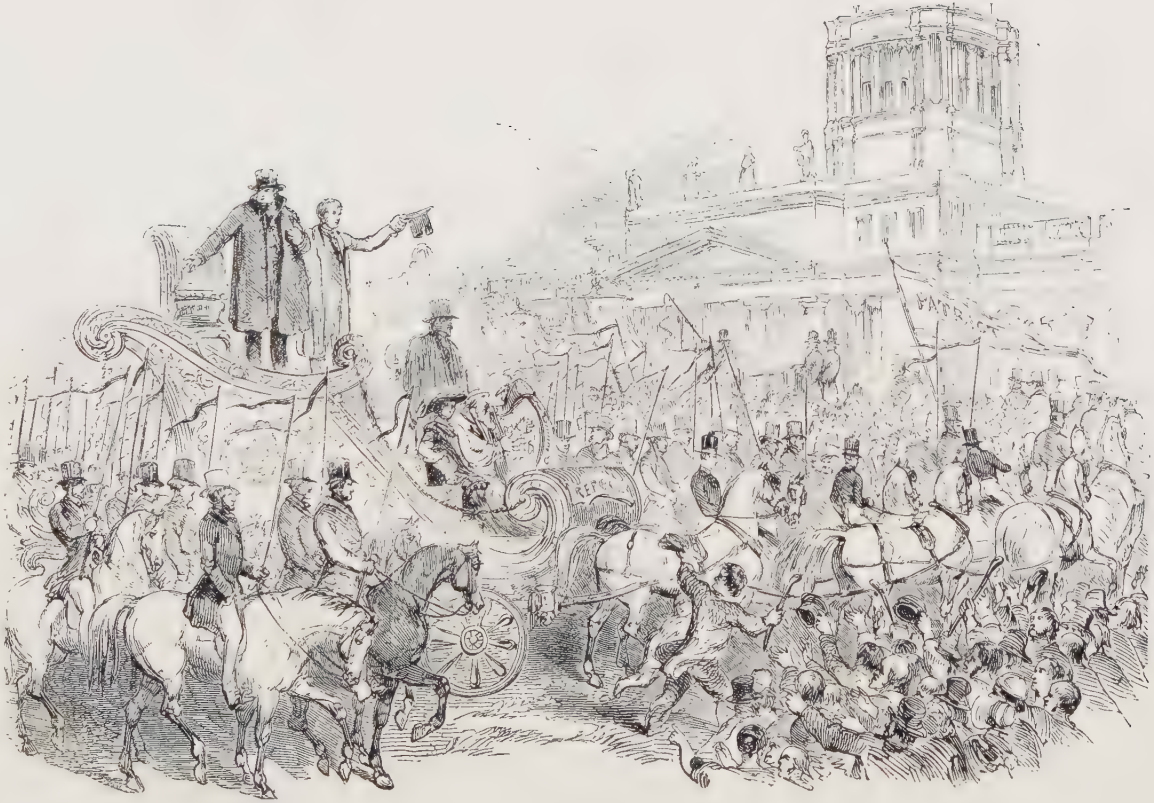
warren, was peculiarly demonstrative. The abstract right could not be denied, but they were exhorted to refrain on the ground of long practice, which confined to Law Lords the exercise of the appellate jurisdiction in the House; by the disastrous effect a violation of this practice would have on the character of the Chamber as a judicial tribunal; and for the irresistible reason that though they were all technically judges, no judge could decide a case which he had not heard, and they had not heard this case. They were at length induced to withdraw, and the decision of the House of Lords was announced by the Chancellor that the judgment of the Irish Court was reversed.

The result was a general surprise, but to no men in the Empire did the news come more unexpectedly than to the persons chiefly affected by it. After the opinion of the English Judges had been published, the prisoners in Richmond abandoned hope of a favourable judgment. There was no electric telegraph in those days, and on Friday, the 13th September, they were assembled for dinner, when the door of the dining-room was thrown open by a messenger of the Repeal Association, named Edmond Haggerty, who rushed in, exclaiming, "You're free, Liberator; you're free." Before he could fully explain himself he was followed by Mr William Ford, whom he had somewhat unfairly anticipated. Pale and panting, the aged attorney, who had posted night and day from London with the record of the Lords' judgment in his pocket, stumbled into the room, flung his arms round O'Connell, and thanked God that his friend and leader was entitled to walk out of prison. A private letter to friends in the country (written by a lady in the family of one of the prisoners) described the scene that ensued naturally and graphically:—

"There was nothing but shaking hands and embracing. Old General Clooney (one of the insurgent leaders in '98) sat down and cried like a child. When his sons, Dan and Morgan, came in, they could not speak for tears. There is a Governor and Deputy-Governor; the latter, after congratulating O'Connell, rushed out of the room weeping.[1] When the Governor came—a large fat man with a red face (Mr Purdon, whom the French newspapers called M. Pardon)—he was so much affected by the company cheering him that he almost fainted; he became ghastly pale and gasped for breath. We had to open the window and throw water upon him. . . . We got on the top of the prison and saw an immense crowd; and such a hurra I never heard."

Fresh arrivals came every minute till the great dining-room was

[1] This sentimental jailer was an Englishman and had been valet to Sir Robert Peel, who gave him his place many years before.



LEAVING RICHMOND JAIL

crowded, when a hasty conference was held on the best method of turning the victory to account for the public cause. The prisoners naturally wished to go home straight away, after three months' absence, but a public procession to accompany them had been already determined on by their friends in the city, and news came every quarter of an hour of the preparations which the Trades, the Repeal Association, and the citizens were engaged in making for it. It was finally agreed that they should go home that evening, and return next morning to the Penitentiary, to leave it in procession. The next morning proved unfavourable, it rained heavily till twelve o'clock; but the procession mustered as if the sky were radiant. Numberless vehicles and horsemen, the marshalled trades with banners and music, the equipages of the Lord Mayor and Corporation, of the Committee of the Repeal Association, and of the political and private friends of the prisoners, were with much pains distributed in the places assigned for them, and a triumphal car, drawn by six white horses, drew up at the prison door.

At two o'clock O'Connell and his late fellow-prisoners took their places; O'Connell and his son on the triumphal car, and the others, who declined that elevated position, in carriages. The rain had for some time ceased, and the autumn sun was shining pleasantly when the procession began to move. From front to rear it extended for nearly six miles, and it was computed that 200,000 men took part in it. It marched slowly into the city; past the Four Courts where the lists had been manipulated, the jury packed, and the illegal verdict found; past the Castle where the blundering and defeated conspirators against Irish nationality were hiding their heads; past the Parliament House which that great multitude confidently hoped to see restored to its original purpose; to the residence of O'Connell in Merrion Square, and then quietly separated.[1]

The public rejoicings extended over the island. Bonfires blazed

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[1] A contemporary note from Dillon will show how complete was the surprise of the decision of the Lords among those who were most interested and most likely to be well informed:—

"For Heaven's sake, my dear Duffy, write three lines with your own hand saying that you are actually and *bona fide* out of jail. I am as incredulous as twenty St Thomases, and will not believe it until I see and feel you all. However, a line from you would go far to dispel my doubt, so in charity write.—Yours ever, J. DILLON."

Mr Ford's race home with the news gave birth to a story which amused people, who, being in good humour, were easily amused. On the journey he could not restrain his enthusiasm. When the train stopped at Chester he announced to the assembled passengers and porters at the top of his voice that O'Connell was going to get out. "Indeed, sir," said an imperturbable English porter; "did you say 'twas at this station the gentleman would get out?"

upon every historic hill in three provinces and throughout a great part of the fourth. In towns there were illuminations, and the popular bands summoned the people to rejoice; but north or south there was no complaint that any one had been insulted or injured. The Nationalists were proud of this unexampled spectacle of the whole people in a delirium of triumph maintaining moderation and courtesy.

The decision of the Lords was a bitter humiliation, not only to the Irish Law Officers whose indictment had broken down, but to the Minister whose policy was thwarted; and his antagonists were not disposed to make this catastrophe pleasant for him. There was a chorus of Whig recrimination. The *Morning Chronicle* declared that O'Connell came forth with redoubled power. "He trampled upon the Government as he left the prison walls, and after such an event Sir Robert Peel could not stand still; conciliation or coercion must be tried on some new and grand scale." "O'Connell," the *Examiner* remarked, "had first been made a martyr and then a conqueror. Peel had taken the wolf by the ears and was unable to hold it or let it go with safety. The Irish State trials might be placed next in infamy to the worst trials of the worst time of the Stuarts; and Peel was responsible because after the discovery of the fraud in the panel he had not stopped short." The *Globe* thought the integrity of the Union might still be preserved; but Sir Robert Peel could not accomplish this result; he had tried and failed. The Whig journal knew, however, where there were men fit for the emergency.

The first impulse of the Government Press was to treat the judgment of the Lords as a party plot to embarrass the Administration. But in truth the judgment was as much a surprise to the Whig party as to the Traversers.[1] Even the *Quarterly Review*, with leisure for deliberation, insisted that certain lay lords might properly have voted to forbid so great a wrong as the escape of O'Connell. Anyone called to the Bar was quite as good as Lord Campbell, and Lord Wharncliffe, as "one of the oldest and ablest chairmen of Quarter Sessions in England," was well entitled to rank himself in the select coterie of Law Lords. It was plain from the tone of the party Press on both sides that something more than the verdict of the jury had been reversed. An eminent Unionist, willing to improve the occasion, demanded of MacNevin in the Hall of the Four Courts if he must not admit now that justice was

[1] Lord Palmerston, writing to his brother at this date, says: "The ending of the O'Connell trial has surprised us all; but the man the most surprised is Chief-Justice Tindal" (who had delivered the answers of the Judges to the questions of the Lords).

to be had under the English system of jurisprudence. "Oh, certainly," MacNevin replied; "if your Court of Appeal be happily framed, justice may be had—after punishment has been inflicted, and at a cost of fifty thousand pounds." The entire defence had cost the Repeal Treasury this enormous sum, and had there been no Repeal Treasury there could have been no writ of error; and the bad law and foul practices of the Irish Courts would have remained in this case, as they commonly remained, without remedy.

A closer observer than the journalists, and one better informed of the facts, confirms the signal importance of the victory.

> "Peel," says Mr Disraeli, "never recovered this blow. . . . . Resolute not to recur to his ancient Orangemen, yet desperate after his discomfiture of rallying a moderate party around his ministry, his practical mind, more clear-sighted than foreseeing, was alarmed at the absence of all influence for the government of Ireland."[1]

And the people of Ireland were not disposed to undervalue the victory. They had strictly obeyed the Leader's injunction to be tranquil, the popular organisation had been maintained in a high state of efficiency, funds had been plentifully supplied, new recruits of importance had been won, and now at length they expected to see some fruits of their patience and perseverance. The conditions, indeed, were singularly favourable for pushing on the cause another stage.

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[1] "Life of Lord George Bentinck."

BOOK III.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

IRISH PARTIES AFTER O'CONNELL'S DELIVERANCE.

THE conditions indeed were favourable to another move in advance —all except one essential condition: the Leader was no longer able to lead. O'Connell left Richmond Prison suffering under a mortal disease, aggravated by public and private troubles. The slow retreat before triumphant enemies from the Mallow Defiance to the sentence and the jail had tortured him. For a time he was disturbed by fears of a popular rising for which no preparations were made, and when these fears passed away, he had to bear the strain of a weightier responsibility in his new undertaking to conduct the cause to speedy success.

But in addition to these public grounds of anxiety there were private grounds. After the lapse of two generations history is entitled to become possessed of one fruitful cause of disquietude, without a knowledge of which the transactions of that day will be imperfectly understood. During the whole period of the imprisonment O'Connell was an unsuccessful wooer. He was labouring under the most distracting influence that can possess a man of his years—a passionate love for a gifted young girl, who might have been his granddaughter. His family were naturally alarmed by this incident, and the more so doubtless that the lady whom he proposed to place at the head of their house differed from them in race and religion, and their feverish anxiety could not fail to react upon him. Their fears were allayed in the end by the lady's persistent refusal to become his wife, but this result was not calculated to restore the composure of O'Connell. In truth, it left him discontented and perturbed in a high degree. Nor was this

all; he was now suffering from the disease from which he died. A competent critic, with the best opportunities to form a correct judgment, has declared that even during the trial it was plain he was fatally invalided—"the old fervour had departed, the old mastery was no more."[1] And less than three years later the French physician who attended him at his death pronounced, after a post-mortem examination, that he died of softening of the brain, and that the disease had lasted for at least two years.[2] In such a condition, weakened by disease, depressed by a disappointment which turned the worldly wisdom of Henri Quatre to folly, stooping under the burthen of seventy years, no longer able to concentrate his faculties on a single point, his powerful will slackened, his great brain distraught, it is no wonder that he lost heart in the cause he loved. It was little suspected at the moment, but many of the ablest men familiar with the period came finally to believe, and they were justified in believing, that this time O'Connell had once more silently resolved to accept the largest concessions he could obtain from Parliament in lieu of Repeal of the Union. He was surrounded and solicited by men ready to make liberal promises on behalf of the Whigs, his life was drawing to a close, and he had little reliance on his probable successors. Compromise, which he named "the doctrine of instalments," was one of his favourite agencies, and at lowest the experiment seemed to be a safe one for the country. Had he taken the people into his confidence, he would probably have forfeited much of his popularity; he would certainly have lost his most devoted supporters, but he would have preserved his peace of mind. By not taking them into his confidence, he drifted by degrees, as we shall see, into a position where his secret purpose and his conduct were no longer in harmony, and his health and happiness were totally wrecked in the conflict. And the device which seemed so safe proved in the end to be charged with calamity and ruin. These were the causes which rendered abortive the

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[1] "I believe that fatal disease was upon him during the trial. His brain had possibly been affected by the unexampled excitement he had undergone. When he spoke on his own behalf the old fervour had departed, the old mastery was no more, and he read to the jury an argument not void of high ability but wholly different from the appeal with which in other days he would have subdued them under the spell of his masterly advocacy."—Lord O'Hagan's Centenary Address, August 1875.

[2] Dr Lacour, of Lyons, who had been in attendance on O'Connell and accompanied him to Genoa, made a post-mortem examination, on which he read a paper before the Société Medicale of Lyons (copied into the *Lancet*, November 1847). Rammollissement of the brain, he declared, was the disease from which O'Connell had suffered during two years previous to his death, which produced the uncertain gait and failing intellect, and to which the fatal termination was entirely attributable.

opportunity for another move in advance. From the day he left Richmond Prison the leader of the people never took a step that was not in its design or in its result a step backwards.

The first meeting of the Association was eagerly expected. The business was fixed to begin an hour after noon, but before ten o'clock in the morning the hall was crowded from floor to ceiling, and multitudes continued to arrive for whom there was no place. O'Connell's reception may be conceived by those who recall the arrears of repressed wrath and indignation which furnished fuel for the present enthusiasm. Smith O'Brien opened the business by proposing as a member the Honourable Hely Hutchinson, brother of the Earl of Donoughmore, who had long thought that Irishmen ought to resume the undivided management of their own affairs, and who now joined the Association because he felt convinced that neither the people nor the leaders would give up the contest till success was achieved. Mr Henry Grattan followed him by proposing Captain John Mockler, an Irishman, an Orangeman, and a soldier, and Davis brought down in his hand a remarkable pamphlet in which Mr Grey Porter, High Sheriff of the Orange County Fermanagh, and grandson of a bishop of the Irish Establishment, had just declared for a Federal Union.

O'Connell spoke for more than two hours, and said many things natural and suitable to the occasion. But men missed what they chiefly expected—his programme of future action. The six months in which he had promised to carry Repeal, if public order were preserved, had nearly run their course, and though nobody thought of holding him to a literal performance of that rash undertaking, they desired to make sure that there was some relation between the means to be employed in the future and the end to be accomplished. The method of procedure symbolised in the Mallow Defiance was abandoned; but the need was more urgent that the substituted method should be intelligible and adequate. He began by recognising a providential character in the triumph of the last week.

"It was not by man's effort that they had achieved the victory over fraud and injustice, but as a blessing bestowed by Providence on the virtuous people of Ireland. But Providence acted through agents, and he owed some atonement to a class of men whom he had often assailed and sometimes supported—the Whigs. He had supported them mainly to keep out the Tories, and prevent them making partisan judges. Had there been no interruption of Tory rule, neither Cottenham, Denham, nor Campbell would ever have sat on the bench. Had the Whigs been recently in office, Pigot and Moore would have been judges in Ireland instead of Lefroy and Jackson."

He exhorted Mr Grey Porter in terms of hyperbole to take one step more, and join the Association. If he came among Repealers, he would command the position which his talents, his fortune, and his station entitled him to; the old leader would pull in the traces, and the new leader might hold the reins.

At length he turned to the topic for which his audience were impatient—the future policy of the national party.

"Three subjects were pressing on his mind. The first related to the Clontarf Meeting. It was legally summoned and illegally prohibited from assembling. The Repealers were bound to vindicate a great principle—the right of meeting; the question was whether it would be necessary to further assert it by still holding that meeting. The next subject was the plan which was under review when the State prosecution commenced of summoning three hundred gentlemen to act as a Preservative Society. The subject was full of legal difficulty and must be approached cautiously. His idea was that this Society should initiate nothing, but correct and control everything in the movement; that the Repeal Association should take no step without their sanction, and that they should be at perfect liberty to point out the course that appeared to them best adapted for carrying Repeal.

"The third subject was a plan to which he was greatly attached—to bring about an impeachment of the Attorney-General, the Judges of the Queen's Bench, and the Ministry. It was often said that the people of England were favourable to Ireland, though the aristocracy were not, and he was now about to try. He would go through England from town to town, and from county to county, and either they would insist upon this impeachment, or he would come back and say, 'Don't mind John Bull, look to your Parliament yourselves.' And were the Ministry to escape? That foul-mouthed letter-opener, Sir James Graham, had in his absence called him in the House of Commons a 'convicted conspirator.' And Peel had such unrivalled powers of face, such total disregard of truth, as to declare in the same place that the Traversers had a fair trial. He would have no faith in England if the English people did not join in hurling Peel from office, and send him adrift with the finger of scorn pointing to him as the monster liar of Parliament."

These were not hopeful devices for repealing the Union. The Council of Three Hundred, as originally projected, was a body designed to represent the constituencies from which an Irish Parliament would be derived; it was to assemble in evasion or defiance of the Convention Act, and O'Connell had suggested that it needed only a little sealing wax upon a piece of parchment to transform such an assembly into the Irish Parliament—which was true, doubtless, if only the sealing-wax were green and the seal, like Charlemagne's, the hilt of a conquering sword. The revival of the original project was impracticable; the national feeling had cooled down far below the point where such an enterprise would be fitting or well timed; but the men who had conducted the public business with vigilance and sincerity during the im-

prisonment would never have consented to substitute for it an abortion borrowed apparently from the mute voting machine which the first Bonaparte had bequeathed to the contempt of mankind. The Clontarf meeting might have been held in vindication of public right, but as it was certain that it would again recede before a proclamation, if Peel decided on issuing one, to hold it would be courting a new defeat. At best, since the change of policy, a Clontarf meeting had lost its original significance, and would be but a poor parody of the meetings of '43. Of the third proposal it was difficult to speak with gravity or patience. Impeachment, while it was still in use, was a State trial of the most solemn character, originated by command of the House of Commons and heard and adjudged by the House of Lords. It has been disused since the practice of responsible government has furnished a simpler and speedier method of punishing the great officers of state who lose the public confidence. To speak seriously of asking the House of Commons to revive this obsolete process against a Minister at the head of a compact majority, and to hold out a hope that the House of Lords, sitting, not as a court of appeal, but as a court of criminal jurisdiction, where every peer is entitled to vote, would afford the relief sought, was to affront the good sense of his audience. The most turbulent member of the Opposition in the House of Commons would no more vote for an impeachment than he would vote for sending the Wizard of the North to trial for witchcraft. But the futility of the project was not the feature that was most alarming at the moment. The appeal to the people of England to hurl Peel from power, and, failing their assistance, the promise to return and tell the Irish people not to mind John Bull but to look to their Parliament themselves, had a fatal resemblance to the former compact with the Whigs when Repeal was postponed to an experiment on English sympathy. Suppose the appeal were applauded by popular audiences in England, what, men naturally asked, would he come back and tell the Irish people to do under these circumstances?

The reception which these projects met in the councils of the party may be judged from the result. They were all abandoned either forthwith or after some courteous delay. At the next meeting of the Association O'Connell reported from the Committee that it was not considered necessary to hold the Clontarf meeting, as the right of the people to meet peaceably in any number had been recognised by the English Judges. And with respect to the Council of Three Hundred, further time was required, without any particular limit, to consider the question fully. The project of an appeal to the English people to insist upon

an impeachment had not yet obtained the assent of his esteemed friend Smith O'Brien, who was of opinion that it would put the Irish Nationalists in a contradictory and undignified position. If he did not succeed in convincing Mr O'Brien that the project was right, he would manage to model it in such a manner that if it did not meet his approval it would at all events put an end to his opposition.

This was idle talk, painful to hear or read. A great opportunity seemed to be slipping away; and the austere gravity and veracity, as well as the methodical and practical work to which the public mind had been schooled during the previous three months, contrasted strangely with devices so lightly taken up and so lightly laid down. There was no public remonstrance, but much silent discontent and dismay. Davis advised patience; a few years or a few mistakes counted for little in the history of a nation which had made up its mind to succeed. The people must be taught that the way was long, but that it was sure if they were true to themselves. Some of his comrades answered that the cause was losing its moral dignity; it had been made ridiculous by threats which were not carried out; and now it was being made ridiculous by proposals which plainly led to nothing, unless they were to lead to a new alliance with the Whigs. But the bulk of the people did not detect much amiss, and the national spirit continued high and confident.

After a banquet in Dublin to the late prisoners, O'Connell returned to Darrynane to rest and recruit his health: and his tour through Leinster and Munster, from the British Channel to the shores of the Atlantic, was one long ovation. Smith O'Brien and Maurice O'Connell were left in charge of the public business in his absence, but no course of action had been agreed upon, and there was, as O'Connell afterwards notified, an intentional pause in the agitation—a pause as perilous as the torpor of a general who, when his enemy is routed, fails to push his advantage. Among those entitled to be consulted he excused his inaction by insisting that Peel would ask new powers of coercion if he got any pretence; but none of his counsellors shared his fear, which proved to be quite groundless.[1] Some politicians, accustomed to fetch and carry for the Whig peers, and who believed themselves able to guide counsels of which they were only the messengers, took occasion of the truce to whisper that a compact with the Whigs was at hand on a new platform; but few believed that they spoke with authority.

The national sentiment, however, had by this time found develop-

[1] See Mr Disraeli's "Life of Lord George Bentinck" and Mr Evelyn Ashley's "Life of Lord Palmerston."

ments which O'Connell did not originate and could not control. In Belfast there were private consultations between Mr Sharman Crawford, Mr Ross, and their friends, for the purpose of organising a Federal party on an independent basis. And throughout the Irish Conservatives there was the feverish anxiety for change which precedes definite action. Dr Maunsell, who was at that time a writer in the *Evening Mail*, of which he subsequently became editor, made a motion in the Dublin Corporation which attracted wide notice, less perhaps from its intrinsic interest than from the position of the mover and the motives to which he appealed. He proposed an humble address to the Queen, praying her to hold her Court and Parliament once at least in every three years in her loyal city of Dublin. Passing lightly over the economic and local reasons for desiring to bring the Imperial Parliament occasionally to Ireland, he addressed himself directly to his own party, and urged it upon them as a measure of self-defence.

"In determining his policy, and in distributing the public patronage, the Minister they had raised to power not only ceased to regard, but deliberately thwarted, their wishes. Only two institutions in which Protestants had a special interest, the University and the Church, were permitted to survive in Ireland. How long would they remain? Let no one hope that a Minister, expert in manœuvres for tiding over political shoals, would not let slip these remaining anchors of Irish Protestantism whenever he considered the sacrifice useful for his ends. When this catastrophe occurred they would find themselves a weakened, denationalised, and betrayed garrison of England. Let them come to terms before the breach in their bulwarks became indefensible. The time was suitable for the introduction of moderate measures such as he proposed; for, strange as the assertion might sound to English ears, he never recollected a period when there was less party spirit or more general good-humour in Ireland. This measure would take Protestants out of the hands of place-hunting lawyers, who made barter and sale of their interest, and it would cut the unhappy ties that bound Irishmen to the tail of either English Whigs or English Tories."

The *Evening Mail* gave its unqualified approval to Dr Maunsell's proposal, and pressed it on the important party whom it represented.

This theory of the duties of Irish Protestants was considered worthy of an elaborate answer in the *Quarterly Review*. It enraged the party leaders to find a project which had been broached in the *Edinburgh*, and supported by the Christian Socialists,[1] and which was borrowed from the Radical scheme of William Cobbett, finding favour with an important section of the Conservative party. In Ireland the public applauded Dr Maunsell's arguments; but if they were good arguments for a rotatory Parliament, it was felt they were still better arguments for

[1] See Rev. Charles Kingsley's "Politics for the People," p. 135.

a domestic Parliament. At worst they helped to shake the traditional Tory policy of an alliance with England in every contingency. Davis wrote to O'Brien:

"O'Connell's apprehension of a coercive policy is gone. It was absurd ever to have felt it. I look upon Maunsell's motion as a clear gain. He is an ultra Tory. Seeking an Imperial session in Ireland as a remedy for grievances may be illogical and is impracticable (so much the better), but it is a loosening of ideas, an abandonment of the old superstition that all was right, and good will come of it—if we are the men of the time. If not, it will be another event for history to scorn us for."[1]

Mr Porter went much further. He desired a Congress for the Empire, and local legislature for the Three Kingdoms. As an alternative, however, he proposed that no measure designed to be in force in Ireland, except army and navy bills, should be submitted to either House of Parliament without the previous sanction of the Irish members of the House where it was introduced. And he declared his object to be to raise his country to a full share in the honours, advantages, and management of the Hiberno-British Empire[2] or by slow and sure steps to the dignity of an independent nation.

The value of these recruits can be best measured perhaps at present by the impression produced on the most powerful and sensitive organ of opinion in England. In reply to a French journal which described the Irish movement as a Democratic one, the *Times* denied that it was Democratic, and pointed out that county magnates and professional men were falling into it: the identical class who had carried the American struggle to success.

"It is from these men that the Repeal ranks are recruited. Why? Because they are proud, aspiring, and ambitious. Because they think their position a false one and an ignominious one. They are nobodies out of their own counties; and his own county each thinks has not its proper influence on the fate of the Empire. They seek what all men seek—to gain importance for themselves and theirs. They want, what all men are glad to obtain—power. They see no other means of doing this than by making Ireland a nation. A distinct nationality and a separate Parliament would give them opportunities of attaining eminence and rank, which are now only obtainable by a fortunate few among them. This would turn the squireen into a senator and give real value to the tinsel splendours of an Irish coronet."

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[1] 25th Sept., '44.—Cahermoyle Correspondence.

[2] Bentham invented this phrase, to soothe national pride, irritated by having everything attributed to England. It anticipated the title of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Mr Porter's plan of a Congress found a certain measure of favour with the *Times*, for reasons which time has not robbed of their force.

"The idea of a Congress has occurred to other minds before this as a solution of many existing difficulties. We are becoming less of a nation and more of an Empire. The conduct of an Empire and the government of one's own people seem quite different and incongruous operations. The very ethical qualities necessary, perhaps, for keeping a barbaric continent in subjection don't do at home. One is shocked to see either Irish peasants or English labourers ruled with the same rod of iron as Mahrattas or Belochees —with the same suspicious discipline as a mutinous man-of-war crew or a black regiment at the Cape. There is, too, something absolutely ridiculous in the present mixture of Parliamentary subjects. An hour's talk on the balance of power between the Continental Empires is followed by three days' animated discussion on a personal squabble. The annexation of a great territory is passed over almost *sub silentio* in a storm of talk about some third-class official appointment. While Lord Lieutenants are called to speedy account Governor-Generals quietly accumulate transgressions. Parliament has too many irons in the fire."

The *Examiner*, which under the control of Mr Fonblanque exercised a decisive influence over English opinion, took nearly an identical view of the situation.

"In noting the monster misrepresentations about the nearness of success in the Repeal cause, we would not go into the opposite extreme in error of denying the progress of the question. We mark closely this stage of advance, that sensible men are disposed to agree that the Parliamentary organisation is not fitted to the exigencies of the Empire, and that some new arrangement is necessary to adjust the appropriate legislative capacity and attention to the peculiar wants of different parts of the country."

At home the *Warder* admitted that Protestant contributions were flowing into Conciliation Hall, and a Conservative journal well informed on the state of opinion in Ulster avowed that the national sentiment was spreading fast, "whole masses of nominal Protestants were preparing not to join the O'Connellite movement, in the first instance, but to adopt a system of organisation which without any effort on his part would enable the Agitator to carry his most ambitious schemes to an easy and triumphant issue."

The best assistance O'Connell could give these collateral movements was to let them alone; for the classes among whom they must find recruits could not forget the quarrels of thirty years or fall into the ranks of which he himself was the leader. But of all policies a policy of abstention was the one he was by nature and habit least able to adopt. And it is possible that his Whig friends saw in these moderate proposals a convenient opportunity of breaking with the monster meetings and the Mallow Defiance. What is certain is that through the agency

of Mr William Murphy of Smithfield, a man of long purse and large brains, he opened negotiations with such of the Federalists as were disposed to listen to him to effect a coalition between them and the Repealers, with what disastrous results we shall presently see.

It was not convenient to interrupt the narrative of the State trials by completing the story of Lord Hawarden's action against Father Davern;[1] but it is necessary to revert to this transaction to complete the story of the contest in courts of law. Lord Hawarden, as one of the Queen's Household, was required to defend himself against charges of the gravest nature and of the most specific character; and he was expected at the same time to expose the libels of priests and popular writers against his class; but he was apparently in no hurry to undertake this duty. Before the proceedings against Father Davern had begun, the priest sickened and died of a fever caught in the discharge of his duty, and the case was supposed to have died with him. But when the proprietor of the *Nation* was entangled in the State Trial, Lord Hawarden apparently thought a suitable opportunity had at length come for renewing his operations. Mr Brewster mentioned the case in Court, and, to the public amazement, flatly denied that any promise had been made by the Lord-in-Waiting to abandon proceedings against the *Nation*, even if the manuscript and the author of the alleged libel were given up. He wished to know what course the defendant was prepared to take. I answered in the pages of the *Nation* that the Irish Land system wanted looking into, and that I was ready to proceed with the case. Upwards of sixty affidavits had been sworn, chiefly by ejected tenants, and an expense of nearly £800 incurred in preparing Father Davern's defence; and these materials were now available for a justification. A day was fixed for the long-postponed motion, and Mr Sheil appeared for the defence. Mr Brewster, however, asked further postponement, not having had time to read his brief. When he found time to read it, he made an offer which in an ordinary case would probably have been accepted: to stop the action on payment by the defendant of the costs already incurred. But this was not an ordinary case; it was the pitched battle of the ejected tenantry against the exterminating landlords, and I declined the offer. Mr Sheil was ready to proceed to trial; but Lord Hawarden's brother official, the Attorney-General, claimed precedence for the State Trial then pending, and the case was adjourned till the next term. When the next term arrived, this significant action at law, which was to justify not

[1] See *ante*: "Two Incidents," p. 102; note on Chapter VI., Book I.

only the particular landlord, but landlords in general against their libellers, was never carried a step farther. How the Lord-in-Waiting satisfied his leader I know not; but it is probable that his Irish advisers considered that further exposure was not convenient. Nor, indeed, was it. The duty of a people to go on for miserable years, and miserable generations, enduring chronic poverty and periodical famine, submitting to be driven from their homes like cattle to the shambles, for the benefit of a handful of absentees, is the sort of duty which will not bear too rigorous a scrutiny. The English landlords who had expressed such boisterous sympathy with their ill-used Irish brother never got the promised exposure of demagogues and libellers; and, if they knew the truth, had no more a common cause with the Irish exterminator and rack-renter than with a planter of South Carolina. Another libel case in which the *Nation* was defendant (these two being the only actions for private libel with which it was assailed, from its foundation in 1842 till its suppression in 1848) will be found in a note below.

NOTE ON CHAPTER I.

ACTION FOR LIBEL AGAINST THE *NATION*.

THE *Nation* was defendant in another libel case at this time, which curiously illustrates the spirit in which justice was administered in Ireland during that era.

The result of the Writ of Error, it may be supposed, did not leave Chief-Justice Pennefather in a happy frame of mind. His law had been peremptorily overruled by the peers, his charge had found no cordial defender in the House of Commons, and the odium in which he was held by the bulk of the people was not compensated by the admiration or gratitude of the political party to which he belonged, for they commonly attributed the escape of O'Connell to the blunders of the Queen's Bench. His temper was further exasperated by the contemptuous and menacing tone of the National party. O'Connell reminded them that this functionary had a son-in-law who was made a bishop by Peel; but as the promotion took place in 1842, before the State Trial was foreseen, he took care to add that quite lately, since his achievements in the Queen's Bench, his nephew had got an excellent place in the Castle. The writers of the *Nation*, who thought it doubtful that a Minister of the cautious temper of Sir Robert Peel would consciously bestow patronage on a judge who had recently presided at a State Trial, took him to task on other grounds, and habitually treated him as one who had revived in the reign of Queen Victoria the prerogative law and the servile obedience which Chief-Justice Scroggs under Charles II., and Chief-Justice Jeffreys under his successor, had brought, with such disastrous results, to the servic of the Crown.

Under these circumstances an incident occurred which enabled the Chief-Justice to regain his good humour for a moment by bringing one of his opponents within the scope of his authority.

An apothecary, named Larkin, contrived to get inserted in the *Nation* an advertisement of certain pills, which he described as effecting an immediate cure in asthma, stomach, liver and bowel complaints, but above all, in consumption, "in all stages short of the actual gripe of death." This prodigious announcement was fortified by a statement that, to remove all doubts, Mr Larkin had exhibited testimonials of success to gentlemen in the *Nation* office, who, it might be assumed, would guarantee their authenticity. Puffs and medical advertisements were systematically excluded from the *Nation*, and on reading this one I wrote a paragraph to express my regret that a quack advertisement had accidentally escaped notice. The apothecary immediately commenced an action for malicious libel; the libel consisting of the words "quack advertisement" applied to his announcement. I put in a plea of justification, and the action came on for trial before Chief-Justice Pennefather. The case turned upon the question whether the description of the cures Mr Larkin claimed to have effected was or was not a quack advertisement. This was the sole fact in controversy. If it were proved to the satisfaction of the jury that it was a quack advertisement, they had no option but to find a verdict for the newspaper. If it were not a quack advertisement, but a fair statement of fact, Mr Larkin was doubtlessly libelled, and might indeed be regarded as a great benefactor of his species. But in no case was it malicious, as I had merely guarded myself from being made responsible, under the guise of "gentlemen in the *Nation* office," for the truth of statements which I disbelieved. The plaintiff's witnesses, as it sometimes happens in dubious plaints, proved the defendant's case. A doctor, called to establish the fact that Mr Larkin was a qualified practitioner, swore on cross-examination that the pills could not perform the promised cures, and that the advertisement in question was in his belief a quack advertisement. A druggist was produced to prove that the plaintiff was in the habit of purchasing medicine from him, and that it was of the best quality—medicine presumably obtained for the manufacture of his panacea—but the witness admitted on cross-examination that these purchases occurred five or six years before, when Mr Larkin was an ordinary apothecary, and had not commenced the sale of his universal medicine. The advertisement clerk of the *Nation*, summoned to prove that certain testimonials had been exhibited to him by Larkin, swore that he had never read a line of them, and that he had strict instructions from Mr Gavan Duffy to refuse all advertisements of an indecent or immoral character. Three or four uneducated men, of the humblest condition, were then produced to prove that they had been restored to health by the use of Mr Larkin's pills. But of these perfect cures, Dr Corrigan (the late Sir Dominic Corrigan, since President of the College of Physicians), who was present in the Court during the examination, swore that he believed one of them was in a confirmed consumption and another in a hopeless asthma. Not a solitary witness was produced to swear that the advertisement in controversy was *not* a quack advertisement; *quod erat demonstrandum.*

After such a case for the plaintiff a defence seemed superfluous, but a defence was made which would have been a sufficient answer to a case resting on stringent evidence.

Professor Kane—afterwards Sir Robert Kane, a chemist of European reputation, who within a few weeks of these events Sir Robert Peel in Parliament pronounced to be at the head of his profession—swore that he had

analysed the pills, and could discern nothing in them but "crumbs of bread." Dr Corrigan swore that the statements in the advertisement could not be true, and that it was clearly a quack advertisement. Sir Henry Marsh, then President of the College of Physicians, swore that the promises to cure the disease specified under the circumstances stated were as false as the promise of the Philosopher's Stone, and that the advertisement was the very *beau ideal* of a quack advertisement. Mr Gunn, proprietor of the *General Advertiser*, swore that he had had twenty years' experience of advertisements, and that this was one of the worst quack advertisements he had ever met with. He added that an advertisement of a similar character had been brought by the plaintiff to his office, and rejected as a quack advertisement.

Then came the judge's charge. It was awaited with extraordinary interest. The *Nation* had criticised the judicial career of Chief-Justice Pennefather in a manner he was supposed not to have forgotten, and its editor was one of the State prisoners who had triumphed over his defective law. The charge, when it came, justified the curiosity it had excited. From beginning to end there was but one obscure reference to the fact that the question which the jury had to try was whether the advertisement was a quack advertisement. From beginning to end there was but a single allusion to the conclusive evidence delivered by Kane, Marsh, and Corrigan. He told the jury, indeed, that the case was so simple they could not require direction. But lest they should interpret this dictum as a suggestion to find for the defendant, he carefully warned them, twice over, that they could not give more damages than five hundred pounds. This was the amount claimed by the plaintiff, and this therefore was their limit. Thus far they might go, but no farther. After the jury left the box the defendant's counsel thought it necessary to insist upon having them called back to Court that they might be told "what they had to try."[1] They submitted that the Chief-Justice had not told them, as he was bound to do, that the substantial question they were put into the box to determine was whether or not the advertisement was a quack advertisement, and that they were not at liberty, in determining this question, to take into account whether the plaintiff was, or was not, injured by the publication. They were recalled accordingly, but the effect of the charge was not disturbed; the jury found a verdict for the injured apothecary, forty shillings damages, to be supplemented by the costs of plaintiff and defendant. A provincial Medical Association immediately passed resolutions expressing their astonishment and disgust at a verdict against the editor of the *Nation* for asserting what "every respectable member of the medical profession and of society at large knew to be true," and proposing that the costs should be paid by a subscription from the profession. The Medical Association of Ireland, acting upon this suggestion, opened a fund for the purpose. As the bulk of the Association were Conservatives, there could not be a more significant proof of the effect the Chief-Justice's charge had produced. In this respect their movement was very welcome; but I paid the costs myself, and thought the £100 well spent in exhibiting to the world the conditions under which liberty of the Press was maintained by Irish journalists. Perhaps the gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease, may understand, from transactions like these, why English law in Ireland, administered by Ascendancy judges, has not won all the veneration to which they esteem it entitled.

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[1] Mr O'Hagan (afterwards a peer and Lord Chancellor) and Mr J. D. Fitzgerald (afterwards a peer and a law lord) were counsel for the defendant.

CHAPTER II.

RECREATIONS OF THE YOUNG IRELANDERS.

We have seen the young men at work in the Council-room, on the platform, and in the newspaper office; the reader will scarce realise how gay and exuberant was the Irish nature that covered so much earnestness and assiduity without following them for a moment into their ordinary recreations.

Once a week, on Saturday evening, we still met at each other's houses in succession. Tea and serious debate occupied the time till ten o'clock; then a light supper, pleasant talk, fun and song till midnight. It was here the literary and political projects of the party were discussed, and the books and articles to be written, the plans to be proposed, and the places to be visited determined. A cordial friendship warmed and harmonised these pleasant meetings. Since that time I have lived in friendly social relations with several communities successively; but I have never seen anywhere such unaffected good fellowship and brotherly sympathy as existed among these young men. They escaped, I think, the chief danger of such reunions; they were far from being a mutual admiration society. Whoever laid himself fairly open to criticism during the week might confidently expect to be chaffed without mercy on Saturday night.

The Answers to Correspondents in the *Nation* were regarded as inflicting severe, and often savage, justice on contributors, and no doubt it was their purpose to repress nonsense; but sometimes the judgment which seemed to strike a recruit so hard was the verdict of his compeers upon one of the ordinary staff; and not infrequently it was the writer himself who reported the verdict. Sometimes an old contributor disguised himself as a new one to experiment upon the opinion of his *confrères*. I remember becoming impatient with one of my friends for the coldness with which he welcomed a genuine poet, whom I professed to have discovered under the blurred pot-hooks and fantastic signature of an illiterate woman; but by-and-by I discovered that "Carolina Wilhelmina," whom he would not be persuaded to admire, was my

learned friend himself in masquerade. In the correspondence of the period I find some faint image of these meetings, which will exhibit at any rate the freedom of mutual criticism which prevailed. MacNevin wrote to me during the State Trial :—

"I never regretted your absence so much as last night. We had a most delightful evening. We talked some politics, but considerably of general philosophy—death, religion, and the State Trials! We read Doheny's prodigious farce, 'Fate and the Florentine Picture'[1] (which, of course, not being in Italy, he never saw), whose voice (only think of a voice in oil colours and articulate canvas) speaks murmuringly in the low wind to Ireland, and tells her to be free. We unanimously agree that it was the worst thing that ever appeared in the *Nation*. We were forcibly struck, too, by your setting down Brewster among the flower of the Bar, one of those 'the least of whom had done something to make a name.' Oh, by the Law, that was too bad! Altogether we had an extremely delightful evening, only marred by the often-expressed regret that you were not with us. You may judge we were in good trim when Davis was sentimental, and talked seriously of having speculated on death in his infancy. Lane not being here, we had none of the discussion on copperplate, line engraving, or generalities in art, which show how far a little knowledge can carry an adventurous spirit. Dillon got joyous over his water, and Cangley was profound over his; both were supplied from the Basin (the Grand Canal Basin). Barry was epicurean and lauded my cook, and Davis and O'Neill and I were the only choice spirits of the night.

"Since I have taken to read Irish history, it clothes the landscape with new interest and beauty, and I have mooted your project of reading it *en costume*. Let us begin by making a party to visit Malahide Castle next week. There is a family portrait of Dick Talbot, I understand, and original portraits of Charles and James, his patrons, and several of the notabilities of that time; worth seeing, I think—though

'Talbot's a dog and James is an ass
Lillibullero bullen a la.'

I am often disgusted with our history, though it is exhilarating reading; not with the barbarities of England; no, but with the factious frenzy and imbecility of our chiefs. Bah! they might have ejected the marauders a thousand times. One of two things ought to have occurred: either Englishmen ought to have united and beaten us, or we ought to have united and beaten them. It was only lately I knew that Con of the Hundred Battles lost about two-thirds of the battles from which he obtained his tremendous title. It was granted him, it is to be presumed, as a compensation for his ill-luck."[2]

Some of the *bons mots* of that period will bear repeating, though it is generally a dreary task to pin down on paper those butterflies of the hour. M'Carthy wrote originally under the signature of "Desmond," which is the country of the M'Carthys. There is a story in mediæval

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[1] Article in the *Nation*, Jan. 20, 1844.
[2] MacNevin to Duffy.

history (of which Maclise has made a striking picture) that when an Earl of Desmond fell wounded into the hands of his hereditary enemies (the Butlers of Ormond), his captors, as they carried him on their shoulders from the battle-field, demanded triumphantly, "Where's Desmond now?" and the stout old earl replied, "Where a Desmond ought to be—on the neck of the Butler." After a social Saturday night at Major Bryan's, of Raheny, the party returning to town missed M'Carthy, who had agreed to remain a few days with his host. "Where is 'Desmond'?" was demanded on all hands. "Don't expect him to-night," said Williams, "I saw him as we left Raheny, where a Desmond ought to be, on the neck of the butler!" It was a constant formula of O'Connell's, exhorting the people to pay the Repeal Rent, that it amounted only to a shilling a year, a penny a month, a farthing a week, and four weeks thrown in for nothing. After Clontarf, when it became a point of honour with the old agitators to repudiate all reference to arms or resistance, Barry wrote an historical song, the burthen of which was

"Charge for Erin and her flag of green."

"What do you mean by charging for Erin?" one of the old school demanded; "is that what you call peaceful and legal agitation?" "Certainly," replied Barry; "I mean 'charging' a shilling a year, a penny a month, a farthing a week, and four weeks thrown in for nothing." On some occasion MacNevin was recounting the friendly efforts he had made to induce one of his kinsmen, a Connaught squire, to become a Repealer, and ending by declaring that he despaired of him. and told him that he might go to the d—— "Did he go?" I demanded. "Well, yes," rejoined MacNevin, "he has gone the first stage; he has joined the Stephen's Green Club."[1] Mr J. J. M'Carthy, the ecclesiastical architect, was a Young Irelander in those days, and his associates, to discriminate him from D. F. M'Carthy, sometimes called him "Jem." "Are you a relative of Jem M'Carthy's?" a visitor demanded of the former. "Oh, yes," replied the poet; "Jem and I[2] are twins." On the occasion of some popular movement in Tipperary, Doheny, on returning to town, described his labours. "For a fortnight I was constantly in the saddle or on Bianconi's car, or addressing meetings, or attending committees. For more than ten days I had not time to

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[1] The Stephen's Green Club is the Whig Club of Dublin.
[2] Gemini.

WILLIAM CARLETON, 1845.
(*From the portrait by* CHARLES GREY, R.H.A.)

change my linen." "Not change your linen!" said McCarthy, with a shudder of disgust; "you're as bad as the fashionable ladies in the 'Song of a Shirt.'

"'Tis not linen you're wearing out,
But living creatures' lives.'"

Smith O'Brien's formal manners and English accent long proved non-conductors between him and some of the younger men. "What do you think of Smith O'Brien?" I asked one of them shortly after the former became a Repealer. "Well," he replied, "I think the amalgam is unskilfully made; there is too much of the Smith and too little of the O'Brien." Frank Dwyer, son of the secretary to the famous Catholic Association, was an official in Conciliation Hall, and used to compare his small income piteously with the liberal provisions made for the secretary, Mr Ray. He got some concession on this complaint, but renewed his claims. "Will nothing satisfy the fellow?" said Doheny; "what does he want now?" In reply, Lane hummed a couplet from Moore's Melodies—

"He longs to tread that golden path of Ray's,
And thinks 'twould lead to some bright isle of rest."[1]

While Mr Butt was still leader of the old Protestant Ascendancy party in Dublin, some one was lamenting the infatuation of citizens who abandoned the plain interest of the country at his bidding. One of our visitors, now a London journalist, suggested that it was the case of Othello,

"Who loved (not wisely) Butt too well."

Carleton, who never made puns, let fall occasionally a saying which exploded like a bomb charged with laughing gas. An occasional correspondent of the *Nation*, who had failed to secure domestic peace in his household, wrote a contemptuous letter against theories then beginning to be debated as the rights of women. "I think," says Carleton, "he is not past conversion; he would come round, I fancy, if some one offered his wife—a foreign appointment." Mr James Duffy, whose liberality contributed largely to create a national literature in Ireland, sometimes held his hand when it was too late to save judiciously. When

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[1] "And as I watched the line of light that plays
Along the smooth wave tow'rd the burning West,
I long to tread that golden path of rays,
And think 'twould lead to some bright isle of rest."
MOORE'S MELODIES.

he issued an illustrated edition of "Valentine McClutchy," Carleton was of opinion that it was not duly advertised, or distributed for review, and remonstrated without result. I walked into Duffy's back shop one day about the time the second number appeared, and found the publisher and the author in high controversy on the subject. Carleton, on seeing me, took up a copy, and looking at me with a face mantling with suppressed fun, muttered, in a slow stage whisper, "This, my friend, is an illustrated edition of 'Valentine McClutchy' that's coming out just now; but don't mention it to anyone, James Duffy does not wish it to be known."[1]

There were points upon which Davis found it impossible to influence more than a small section of his friends. When he proposed to form a class to study the Irish language, when he desired to revive the native names of historical men and places, there was vehement resistance. O'Brien seconded both projects energetically, if he did not originate them. "Accustom everyone," he wrote to Davis, "to write Irish words in the Irish character;"[2] and at forty years of age he became a student of Gaelic. A library edition of the "Spirit of the Nation," with music and illustrations was issued, and Davis procured the assistance of the Irish scholars O'Donovan and Curry to correct the proper names. But the first appearance of the genuine Gaelic patronymics created consternation like that which attended the introduction of Kalupso, Herakles, Hektor, and their associates into English literature, in the place of familiar favourites. Davis insisted that to understand history, topography, or romance, it was indispensable to study the native nomenclature. Fer-

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[1] One evening when my house at Rathmines was the place of meeting, Barry, in passing the Canal at Portobello-bridge, slid accidentally into the water, and was drawn out with some difficulty by Lane. He returned to his residence to change his dress, and Lane reported the catastrophe to his friends. It was thought proper to assume that he was actually drowned, and his epitaph, his last will and testament, and an account of his premature death, were improvised, in various metres, by his comrades. Unfortunately the squibs have perished, and I can only recall a couplet from the mock heroic ballad on his death, on account of an allusion to a practice jocosely imputed to him, probably without any foundation—

> "Pale, pale were his bonny cheeks and clammy as the clay,
> Pale, pale were his whiskers twain, the dye was washed away."

In latter years, when Mr Barry renounced his early opinions, an indignant friend assured Denny Lane that all the good works of his life were counterbalanced by the sin of having saved a man from being drowned who proved in the end not worthy to be hanged! The weekly supper never got any regular name fixed on it, though such an arrangement would obviously have been convenient. John Pigot tried hard, but unsuccessfully for Clan na Gael. At a much later period, when privacy was necessary, some one suggested the happy equivoque of the Invisible Greens.

[2] Davis Papers, Dec. 1844.

managh—to those who could interpret it—meant the land of lakes; Athenry, the ford of kings; Dunleary, the fort of the sea; Kildare spoke of wooded plains, and Clonmel of abundant fertility. But he pulled against a heavy current of resistance. A bantering letter of the period addressed to Thomas MacNevin, who was the peculiar enemy of the innovation, tells the story; with a little exaggeration, perhaps, designed to tease that anti-Gael.

"It was impossible to keep my appointment with you yesterday; I had a *sederunt* with Davis over a quarto edition (of the "Spirit of the Nation"), and it lasted long, because the moot points were various and troublesome. He wanted to strike out all the squibs—Mangan's, Williams', everybody's, in short; but I would not consent to this. 'Shall there be no cakes and ale because he is virtuous?' Yea, by St Anne, and banter shall be hot i' the mouth. I have yielded, however, about the native names, and I fear a new 'insurrection of the Bards' in consequence. The text of the ballads is to be larded with a Celtic nomenclature furnished by John O'Donovan, which sometimes consist of an aggregate meeting of consonants with scarcely a vowel to take the chair. They dislocate the metre, evaporate the melody, and often efface the rhyme itself. Since M'Carthy got back his revises he declares it is useless to rhyme any more; if he wrote

Let us go down
To pretty Kingstown,

Davis, he says, would turn it in the next edition into—

Let us go down
To pretty Dunleary,[1]

And Williams has sent back a bundle of proofs in which he was required to reconcile his verses to the Gaelic prosody, endorsed—

Lord save us
From Alaric Davis!

You will stare with all your eyes when you see what has become of some of your old acquaintances. What do you say to the Lee becoming the Laoi, and the Shannon the Sionamn, Limerick Luimneach, and Sleive Donard Sliab Domangort? It seems to me this is going too fast: it would need the authority of an Irish Parliament, methinks, to get the present generation to call Glengariff Glengarbh? And how many men and women of our own age will be able to spell O'Shiadhail, which it seems is the correct name of your favourite orator in the Catholic Association? Pigot, in a fine frenzy, says, let them learn. But suppose (which is highly probable) they won't learn! My idea was to put the Irish names in notes, leaving the text as it was written, and await the possible future when the honourable members for Mallow and Fermoy will introduce a bill making the authentic spelling compulsory in official documents and national school-books. I am afraid to contemplate the effect on James Duffy's costly venture.

'Dear Tom, this green book, which once found a good sale,
I fear through these curs'd orthographics will fail.'

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[1] Dunleary was the native name of Kingstown.

"I must tell you of a single combat we had in the course of the business, fought with broad-bladed sarcasms and short two-edged repartees. Davis demanded *apropos* of the line in the Muster of the North—

'Out from the stately woods of Truagh, M'Kenna's plundered home,'

who the deuce the M'Kennas were, of whom he professed never to have heard before. I told him they were Northern chiefs and kinsmen of mine. Could you conveniently, inquired my sarcastic gentleman, furnish as a note for the next edition, a list of the articles carried away by the invader from your kinsman's plundered home? 'Item,' one 'querin' for grinding corn 'item,' one stone pot for making whey; 'item,' six wooden 'methers' for drinking the same; 'item,' two rusty 'skians' and a set of bagpipes. But I gave him a Roland for his Oliver. He has written a fine resonant Cambrian march, and seems disposed to go extensively into Welsh nationality in honour of the Ap-Davises. I suggested that he was gilding refined gold, and otherwise indulging in wasteful and ridiculous excess, in writing national songs for a people so adequately provided already as his Cambrian kinsmen. 'How is that?' he said. 'Why,' I rejoined,' surely you cannot be ignorant of the great national anthem of the Principality—

'Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a ——'

By the way, what was the other illustrious thing besides a Welshman Taffy was? I have forgotten.'

"He was bent on spoiling his noble 'Owen Roe,' the finest effect of which is its dramatic opening ('Did they dare, did they dare?') by inserting an introductory verse. He did not quite yield to my vehement remonstrance; but I had a note from him since, saying Pigot agrees with him, but John O'Hagan agrees with me, and he submits to the majority."[1]

MacNevin replied that for his part he was not a man of the pagan or even mediæval period, but a mere modern, and that he would not allow himself to be turned into a Druid or a Brehon.

"I think"—he wrote in the gay, airy badinage which he loved—"I think our task is to work the virgin mine of nationality; but not, I submit, the nationality of Ollam Fodlah and other gentlemen before or immediately after the Flood. Or of Dathi (that antique hero whom Mr Holebrook depicts on the volunteer's card in a yeoman's uniform). Our task is to elevate the character of the people, raising up, in fact, their bump of self-esteem and suppressing the bumps of servility and fury. Drawing these fabulous heroes from their murky hiding-place is like Lane singing inane songs solely because they are older than Eman ac Knuc's hills.[2] We must be cosmopolitan, and deviate occasionally from our native bogs. We shall have a better chance of success by being less Irish, though not on that account less nice. James Duffy has agreed to publish a volume of biographical essays on the great men of European history; will you let us make it a joint book by you and me as a little memorial of regard? Let us no longer

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[1] Duffy to MacNevin.
[2] Eman ac Knuc, *i.e.* Ned of the Hills, a noted outlaw.

press poor Jacobo Duffei to the earth with records of centuries which no one will read, and, *O pessime!* which no one will buy. These pre-Adamite fictions are the Sabine bracelets and helmets which smother the Roman virgin of Wellington Quay."[1]

Excursions to memorable places was a favourite recreation in those days, and during the transactions which immediately followed the State Trials, I made a tour from Dublin to Darrynane, the home of O'Connell, with two friends, John O'Hagan and D. F. M'Carthy. We were all young and all Nationalists, and our course lay through some of the finest scenery and most memorable places in Ireland. Through Kilkenny, where the Confederation had sat two centuries before; where the hall of the Ormonds was still rich in portraits of memorable actors in Irish history, and where traditions of Grattan and Flood and young Tommy Moore, and of John Banim in a later day, had not died out. Through New Ross, where Martin Doyle, one of the survivors of '98, fought the battles over again on the very battlefields; along the Suir to Waterford, a land peopled with memories of every era of resistance to English supremacy, from the raid of Strongbow and the invasion of Cromwell down to the memorable election of 1826, which precipitated Catholic Emancipation. By Cappoquin and Lismore, through the divine valley of the Blackwater, with a detour to Mount Mellaray, where the Monks of La Trappe had established among the barren hills a model and museum of skilful industry, and, like Columbanus a thousand years before, were transforming the wilderness into cornfields and the people into docile pupils. Through Cork, dear to the young tourist, chiefly as the birthplace of Maclise, Barry, and Hogan, of Mahony, Maginn, and Forde, as the home in evil days of Arthur O'Leary, and still the home of Father Mathew and of some of their own associates in literature and politics. We had long known Father Mathew, but to see the great moral reformer, who was changing the character of a nation, living contentedly in a shabby little house, placarded outside and in with teetotal songs and broadsheets, with no attendant but one feeble old man, helping himself to whatever was wanted at table with an unaffected and cheerful simplicity, leaving his guests or his meals on the call of a peasant or a labourer who snatched a moment's leisure to take the pledge, was to comprehend the lives of the saints as we had never done before. Our way lay also by the Lakes of Killarney, Inistioge, and lone Gougaune Barra, where the dream of Callanan was realised by the students of

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[1] MacNevin to Duffy.

another generation praying for his memory in a scene which he had made poetic ground. Through the gloomy pass of Ceimaneich and over the sombre mountains of Kerry, to the home of O'Connell on the shore of the Atlantic, where a cordial welcome awaited us.

During the journey, after a day's travel or sight-seeing, tea, seclusion, a volume of poetry, and a talk prolonged beyond midnight, made a feast which had no need to envy the luxury of chateaux. But the privacy was hard to obtain for a state prisoner fresh from Richmond; and deputations, addresses, bands, and the endless good cheer of a hospitable race, drew us constantly back from the world of poetry and dreams. To win a few hours' privacy was a triumph sometimes bought too dear. In Waterford, the birthplace of Richard Sheil, whilst we were hastily visiting the historic places, the "son of the Mayor" was reported at various points to be in search of us, but we exulted in escaping his pursuit; and only came to know him two years later as Thomas Francis Meagher, who will be longer remembered in Waterford and in Ireland than the orator whose birthplace was an object of such interest to us that day. O'Hagan suggested it was now my Repeal martyrdom commenced. When we reached Darrynane we found O'Connell and a number of visitors in his mountain home. He looked an Irish chieftain nowhere so thoroughly as in his own house. Whoever has seen him conducting his guests on an autumn noon through the picturesque defiles above Darrynane, or out with his beagles enjoying the primitive sport of a mountain district, and sitting at the head of his board a gracious and watchful host, will have a series of pleasant pictures in his memory.

At Darrynane I found letters from Davis which throw some light on current events, and on his own generous character. He was doing my work to ensure me a holiday, and he was chiefly anxious that it should not be too short a one, as I desired to return and relieve him from his post.

"My Dear D——,—You must not come back here till the middle of October. I cannot leave town, as one of my brothers is going to be married about the middle of next month. The *Nation* is easy to me, and will grow easier. Send 'Laurence O'Toole' within a week, or leave it to number six of the revised 'Spirit of the Nation' [then in course of publication]. I am proud of my own dear, dear Munster having pleased you so much. I love it almost to tears at the thought. Maddyn has puffed me frightfully in the third part [of 'Ireland and its Rulers']. You forgot the literary materials [materials for the literary pages of the *Nation*]. O'Connell holds out against any rule on the Reading-Rooms [a rule to grant a subsidy on certain conditions], but is practically liberal in voting money for them, so we must make the best of it. I wrote to William Griffin [brother of Gerald Griffin,

THOMAS FRANCIS MEAGHER.
Ireland, 1847.

GENERAL T. F. MEAGHER.
Commanding Irish Brigade U.S. Army, 1862.

Thomas F. Meagher

author of the 'Collegians'], he will gladly guide you in Limerick. Tell M'Carthy to write words to M'Carthy's March in the *Citizen*. Give him my respects, and my best regards to John O'Hagan. E. B. Roche wants much to meet you and to get you to Trabolgan.

"So you really think you met my sweet girl [the girl of Dunbuie, the heroine of a song]. Vanity of vanities. She appeared only to me; even Lane who was by my side did not see her. I again pray for 'St Larry O'Toole,' or for his postponement to number six. Do answer me about it. The *Belfast News-Letter* [a Conservative journal] has by far the most able and flattering review of the 'Spirit' I have seen. *The Northern Standard* [organ of the Orangemen in my native town] is beginning to quote our poet's corner wholesale. Tell O'Connell that the first news Robert Tighe [an Irish barrister] had of the liberation was from the shouting of the Frankfort mob! What other man since Napoleon could have produced such an effect? Present my respects to the O'Connells, and believe me as busy as a swallow."

A couple of days later there came another hasty note—

"Dear D——,—Here are some letters which you can leisurely answer at Darrynane. I reviewed the 'Memorandum on Irish Matters' on September 14. Get John Pigot to play the 'Bouchaleen Buidhe' and 'The Marriage' for you [airs to which Davis had recently written songs]. 'Tis as sweet as your 'Mina Mumhain.'

"For God's sake get O'Connell to undertake, or to allow others to undertake, a plenipotentiary mission to establish Repeal Reading-rooms, and give them books and good advice. Damn the ignorance of the people; but for that we should be lords of our own future; without that, much is insecure."

A letter written to Davis by one of the tourists will illustrate the character of the pleasures and studies he had encouraged his friends to relish.

"I send you a handful of hasty memoranda. At Kilkenny the hall where the Confederation of 1644 met is used as a coach-house; only the Gothic windows remain. The Franciscan Abbey is a ball-court. Of Rothe's house there is enough to enable one to comprehend what sort of a residence belonged to a prince-merchant two hundred years ago, who coined money and levied troops; but the tomb of the best of the Rothes, the Bishop, in the Cathedral has the inscription barbarously scratched out; tradition says by order of one of his English successors. Doctor Scott has a banner of the Confederation era with the head of the Virgin, of exquisite beauty, brought over by Rinuccini, I fancy. Did Michael Banim ever tell you the romantic story of John Banim's early courtship, during which he caught the disease that finally killed him? You know the wonderful portrait of Black Tom [Charles the First's Earl of Strafford] at Ormond Castle—a human panther, lithe, beautiful, and terrible; there is another head of him at Lismore Castle, no more like the first than I to Hercules or the Head Pacificator. Have you ever visited Mount Mellaray? Do. The monks show what industry and security could

[1] 21st September, '44. Davis to Duffy.

make of the waste lands of Ireland. It is very solemn up yonder in the mountains, and the organ in the little church, playing a 'Te Deum' for our victory, moved me as music never did before. It was like a chorus of exulting angels. We were delighted to find the 'Voice' [of the *Nation*] in their library, and when we reached Cappoquin celebrated our visit by six-and-thirty rhymes on Mellaray, which are duly recorded in O'H.'s journal.[1]

"We visited Schools, Reading-rooms, Teetotal Societies, and bookshops everywhere, and made notes. The books are detestably English; no Irish novels, poems, or plays, except by accident. There are six-and-thirty teetotal bands in Cork, set up at a cost of from fifty to a hundred pounds each, but the Teetotal Reading-rooms are a melancholy spectacle. We inspected them with Father Mathew, and he laments the bookless shelves, so much that I count on an improvement. We promised some books, and I suppose Hudson and you will aid us. Compared to the peasantry in Waterford and Kilkenny, who are fine vigorous and masculine fellows, your compatriots in Cork are an inferior race. In the beautiful city the Sleive[2] insists that the young men look like mice. I hope they are mice fit to gnaw the net that has trapped the wolf-dog. One of Hogan's earliest works, a Britannia done for an insurance office, was shown us, and it struck me as weak and spiritless; and Desmond insists that his bust of Father Mathew is a likeness neither of body nor soul. We had bands, bonfires, arches, addresses, 'sound the loud timbrel,' etc., till we were aweary and longed for a little quiet. At Roche's Hotel (Killarney) the waiter informed us that Mr

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[1] Duffy to Davis. — The students of another generation will perhaps like a specimen of these versicles. Somebody started the idea of finding a rhyme for that puzzling noun proper, Mellaray. It was at first assumed that there was no English rhyme but celery; the travellers, however, soon hit upon others, and agreed to fabricate a couplet in turn till one of them broke down. They succeeded in turning out three dozen jingles, and each new success was welcomed with a chorus of huzzas and laughter, louder and heartier of course when the success was only won by a hair's breadth. After the lapse of a generation some of the couplets linger in my memory with other reminiscences of that pleasant time. This was the first and the worst:—

"From O'Connell and Steele and that jolly good fellow Ray
I've scampered away to the monks of Mount Mellaray."

And this, perhaps the most audacious, when one of the competitors was driven to extremity for the six-and-thirtieth rhyme:—

"They tunnelled a road would have puzzled Brunel, R. E.,
Such adroit engineers are the monks of Mount Mellaray."

Long before each man had completed his round dozen it became necessary to shift the accent from the antepenultimate syllable, *ex. gr.*

"I met a young maiden, but straightway down fell her eye,
She took me for one of the monks of Mount Mellaray."

Since the first edition of this book was published I have seen the diary of that day of one of the tourists, and select from it a couple more of the jingles which, it seems to me, a discriminating critic might easily attribute to their respective writers:—

"Say, shall we muster the people in fell array,
Or sleep in seclusion and sackcloth in Mellaray?"

"*Diabolum semper memento repellere*—
Such is the maxim of life at Mount Mellaray."

[2] Sleive Cuillen was the *nom de plume* of one of the tourists.

D——, the martyr, had been in Killarney yesterday! We expressed our regret that we had not the pleasure of an introduction to that eminent person, and Sleive Cuillen read us the 'Lord of the Isles' in peace. Orange handkerchiefs are the common head-dress of the women in Kerry, who have no idea of the significance of that colour in the North. There is a charming library at Darrynane, looking over the Atlantic, and rich in presentation copies: but better than the library is the kennel. The dogs are the noblest I ever saw. Some of the old ones have a dignity that is superhuman. One venerable beagle ought to have been a Chief-Justice as far as wisdom and authority are concerned; only he looks too honest for the office.

"Talk of a Highland breakfast; but give me a Darrynane breakfast, and O propitious gods, give me an appetite to enjoy it. 'Tis Homeric, or rather let me say Ossianic. A hot roast or two, grilled fowl, smoking potatoes, slim-cake, delicious fresh honey, home-made bread and baker's ditto, and added to these all the ordinary edibles and drinkables of a metropolitan table. John went out fishing to give us another dish, but only caught turbot, which were reserved for dinner. 'Tis a fishful bay; he tells me that the local fishermen have sometimes brought home forty thousand mackerel and the like in a single haul. Desmond says: 'Conciliation Hall is nothing compared to a Darrynane hawl.' O'Connell ate like a chieftain—if the table was abundant and varied, the great man had stomach for it all. Let no puny nibblers of toast or sippers of tea pretend to resist a Titan like this. The O'Connells have a stock-farm on an island called Scariff, which rises perpendicularly out of the Bay, and breaks the wave from Labrador; of which you have perhaps heard! [it was a constant allusion in O'Connell's speeches] which wave, by the way, your three friends got up at peep of day to see, but did not altogether identify.

"Before reaching Darrynane we visited Staigefort. You have never seen it, I fancy; though you know it perhaps from the model in the Dublin Society. 'Tis an Irish Colosseum—the grandest and most extensive Pagan monument in the island; and sitting in the midst of circling hills which seem a gigantic copy of it. The walls are nearly twenty feet thick, built of dry stone—but I am not going to write a bad antiquarian essay.

"I was struck by a saying of Father Mathew's the other day, at Cork, that Orphan Societies rear a bad and dangerous progeny—without home or social affections. He prefers the good old practice of fosterage, and thinks it ought to replace those societies. He wishes to see fruit-trees planted on the highways and in domains, which travellers should have an unquestioned right to pluck. He says they would be an agreeable offering to the poor. Are not these the thoughts of a genuine Apostle?

"At Cappoquin a vigorous young priest (Father Meany) addressed the people in Irish by the light of a bonfire, and I have seldom witnessed a scene fitter for an Irish Wilkie to paint. We sailed down the river to Youghal and had Dominick Ronayne's house pointed out to us. Poor Dominick, whose squibs were so popular in the first Repeal movement, is now nearly forgotten. It was he, his friends insist, who prompted O'Connell with the 'Derby Dilly, carrying six insides,' and the comparison of 'The Last Rose of Summer,' for Walter of the *Times*. *Sic vos non vobis.*"

A second letter from the same correspondent finishes the account of this southern excursion.

"You are an infidel in the case of 'the Girl'; I swear we saw her twice.

The second time was in the evening of the same day; there was a bonfire opposite the hotel for 'the Martyr' and a dance by its light, and who should reappear but 'the Girl'? We were tempted to join the crowd and trip a measure, but we thought it would not become the austerity of martyrs and confessors.

"I do not care about having 'Laurence O'Toole' or anything else of mine in the sixth number [of the 'Spirit'], but pray put two or three things of M'Carthy's and Fraser's; and I think you ought to put in O'Callaghan's song. We found it in the country in several places where we did not expect it. O'H. and M'C. are brimming over with poetry, begotten of the beauties of Munster (animate and inanimate); expect great results by-and-by.

"I am impatient to see Maddyn's third part. We got the *Tablet* at Father Mathew's and read Dormer [a sketch of Davis] there, which we thought clever and generous, but not graphic. As O'H. says, an acquaintance recognises its truth, but it would give a stranger no clear notion of the original. It is a sin to complain, however, where there was so much good feeling and manliness.

"From Darrynane we will go to Limerick, where I will call on your friend Griffin, and home immediately, making a month in all—the pleasantest I can recall, always excepting my honeymoon. *Apropos* of honeymoons, I wish it was your brother's brother that was getting married—I fancy it would promote his happiness, and put a strait waistcoat upon discontents which shake the peace of Jupiter in his seclusion."[1]

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[1] Davis's Papers, Duffy to Davis.

CHAPTER III.

THE FEDERAL CONTROVERSY.

After a month's retirement at Darrynane, O'Connell broke silence in a letter to the Association on a long-postponed topic—the future policy of the National party. The letter reached the proportions of a President's Message, and touched on so many subjects, that for a moment its main purpose was not understood. The projects recently announced were tacitly or openly abandoned. There was no reference to the Council of Three Hundred; the monster meetings were declared to be at an end—"it would be insulting braggadocio to revive them"; and as respects the impeachment, there was merely a passing allusion to the incidents of the State Trial as furnishing materials for Parliamentary inquiry. In lieu of these proposals O'Connell entered on an elaborate comparison between the demands of the Repealers, that the Constitution of '82 should be restored, and the proposals of the Federalists to create a subordinate legislature for strictly local purposes; and this comparison closed with a declaration which it was the main purpose of the letter to make.

"For my own part," he said, "I will own that, since I have come to contemplate the specific differences, such as they are, between simple Repeal and Federalism, I do at present feel a preference for the Federative plan, as tending more to the utility of Ireland and the maintenance of the connection with England than the proposal of simple Repeal. But I must either deliberately propose, or deliberately adopt from some other person, a plan of Federative Union, before I bind myself to the opinion I now entertain."[1] This sudden preference, it was intimated, would explain his motive for not improving the decisive victory obtained on the Writ of Error. "The Federalists cannot but perceive that there has been on my part a pause in the agitation for Repeal since our liberation from unjust captivity."

It was not surprise these confessions created so much as dismay. A year had elapsed since the suppression of the Clontarf meeting, and

[1] Repeal Association, October 14, 1844.

during that year we had become familiar with retrograde movements. The language of the defence in the Queen's Bench bore slight resemblance to the language of the Mallow defiance. The relinquishment of the Arbitration Courts and the disratement of the Repeal Wardens fell even below the tone of the defence. The projects announced on the release of the State prisoners, such as they were, had disappeared; and now, as it seemed, he meditated retreating at one stride from the demand for legislative independence to the suggestion of a subordinate Parliament. One other backward step would bring us, as in 1834, to "Justice to Ireland" and alliance with the Whigs.

What was fitting to be done in such a contingency? Hitherto the Young Irelanders had acquiesced silently in his public proposals, or merely dissented as far as was necessary to save their honour. But here was counsel to abandon the specific demand to which the country was pledged in the face of Europe and America, and to abandon it in favour of a scheme whose chief merit was that, as a *tertium quid*, differing from O'Connell's proposal, and suggested by men not in alliance with him, it began to get listened to by Irish Protestants and English Radicals. Once adopted by O'Connell, it would have to encounter the same hostility as his original demand; and it would gain no counterbalancing support; for nothing was more certain than that the men who gave Federalism its chief importance would not enlist under his leadership. Federalism as it was then generally understood meant little more than the creation of a Legislative Council with fiscal powers somewhat in excess of the fiscal powers of a grand jury, but not authorised to deal with the greatest concerns of a nation—domestic and international trade, the land code, education, national defences, and the subsidies to religious denominations.

Looking back now with a knowledge of subsequent events, it is difficult to doubt that if the Repeal Association had retreated on Federalism it would have committed suicide. The most capable and public-spirited members would have left it, as they did subsequently leave it in 1846; the sympathies of foreign countries would have been withdrawn from a people so fickle in their aims; and at the same time the original Federalists, who naturally desired to retain the control of their own cause, would have held aloof; the Association would have dwindled into the condition of the nameless and forgotten societies which had preceded it, and the National movement would have ended in '44 as it ended ten years earlier.

I had returned to the *Nation* office from the Munster tour before this

event, but my colleagues had scattered on similar excursions—Davis to the North, Dillon to the West, Barry and Lane to Cork, MacNevin to Gort, and others elsewhere. There were none of them in the Association when the letter was read, and there were none of them in the *Nation* office when the letter came to be reviewed. I had to act without the benefit of their advice, or to take the responsibility of maintaining silence before so cardinal an event. None of us distrusted the Federalists; on the contrary, we had close friends among them, and watched their progress with constant interest. Davis had defeated an attempt to exclude them from Parliament as Anti-Repealers; we were in habitual communication with the chief Federalists in Dublin and Belfast, and they had been treated nowhere with more respect than in the *Nation*. But we were all persuaded, and I, who knew them of old, felt certain that Mr Crawford or Mr Ross would never act with O'Connell, that Mr Wyse or Colonel Caulfield would probably never act with him, and that if he attempted to force a junction the result would be alienation and hostility.

The duty of the *Nation* under the circumstances seemed clear to me. At any risk it must hoist the danger signal. Otherwise, not only the present fortune of the public cause, but its prospects in the coming time, might be wrecked. The writers in the *Nation* had won the confidence of their own generation to an unexampled degree; if they forfeited it by want of courage or independence, the effect on the character of the generation would be disastrous. The best recruits who joined the Association had joined it because they believed there were now men in its ranks who would resist any arbitrary stroke of authority, even from O'Connell. They would not long remain if this belief were destroyed. The Protestants of the middle classes who still held aloof justified themselves on the ground that to join O'Connell was to abandon all individual discretion; and the Unionists had jeeringly warned the young men, from time to time, that they were the marionettes of a showman who when it suited his purpose would ring the bell and announce that the performance was at an end.[1] It was about to be seen whether this description was just either to him or to them. With respect to the people, the duty of the *Nation* was still clearer. The aim of the journal had been to so educate and discipline them that it would be impossible to retain them in subjection to England; but if they were passive in the hands of their leaders they would never be formidable before their

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[1] "Voice of the Nation," p. 35.

enemies. Liberty does not reside in institutions but in habits of thought and action; nor is there any mode of winning it compatible with retaining in pupilage the nation who are to be liberated. In truth, at this time the Irish people were far from being passive; how far was exhibited significantly two or three years later. They were eager that the movement should be kept in the right path, but unwilling that O'Connell's authority should be rudely questioned, even when they believed him to be in the wrong. It might be said of the masses of the people, and said with equal truth of the cabinet of the movement, that they often desired a change of policy but never a change of leaders.

My only difficulty was consideration for my colleagues. The *Nation* habitually spoke in behalf of men who had refrained from direct controversy with O'Connell whenever it was practicable, and I was unwilling to commit them, even in this serious contingency, to a conflict which they might still see some honourable method of avoiding. But, after all, the responsibility lay mainly with me; for if O'Connell could ruin the *Nation* for resisting his new policy, I would be the chief sufferer. I determined, therefore, after anxious reflection, to address a remonstrance to him in my own name, printed in the place ordinarily occupied by the chief leading article, but practically speaking only for myself. As it produced important results, it will be necessary to give some extracts from this document.

After excusing myself for addressing him in a public letter because I was no longer a member of the Association where the subject ought properly to be debated, and because a letter seemed a more friendly and respectful method of remonstrance than a leading article, I proceeded to combat his proposition that Federalism was better than Repeal as a national settlement, and contended that it was not better but worse:

"In the first place, the Imperial Representation on which it is based is calculated to perpetuate our moral and intellectual subjection to England. It will teach the aristocracy still to turn their eyes to London as the scene of their ambition. It will continue to train them in English manners, feelings, and prejudices, and establish permanently a centre of action apart from their native country. By the same process it will plant deeper the evil of absenteeism. It will compel Lords and Commons to reside out of the country, and continue the drain upon our resources in which you found so strong an argument for Repeal. In this respect it is, I think, a worse cure for absenteeism than Dr Maunsell's Teetotum Parliament."

A share in the control of the Empire I contended was an inadequate compensation for accepting an Irish legislature with shorn authority, for our minority in the Imperial Parliament would be as powerless here-

after as it was powerless at present to determine the policy of the Empire. It was, moreover, a settlement not less difficult to obtain; for while Repeal only contemplated the restoration of a Constitution which formerly existed in Ireland, Federalism raised a new and serious difficulty by necessitating a reconstruction of the Empire on a new basis, with local legislatures in each of the three kingdoms.

I then urged, as courteously as I could, the delicate objection that Federalism, whatever were its merits, would not be promoted by his adopting it.

"Federalism has undoubtedly the advantage of Repeal in one point—it is less hated. Unionists have not been trained to regard it as a raw head and bloody bones. They look upon it with comparative calmness, and are certainly more likely to become reconciled to it than to Repeal. But it would not be in a better, but in a worse, condition for effecting this purpose if the national party adopted it to a man. The Lords used to think it an excellent reason for rejecting measures that they were countenanced by O'Connell; and I fear party prejudice at home would treat Federalism in the same way. To be misunderstood and misrepresented is the progressive tax upon greatness, and since you are a millionaire you cannot complain of paying in proportion."

I warned him that, even if Federalism were desirable, the way to create a party for it was not by identifying it with Repeal. The men mooting the question were men who always kept a day's march behind the people. If he had begun three years before by asking Federalism they would be now speculating on "Justice to Ireland" and the restoration of the Whigs; and if ever he fell back on their ground he would inevitably find it deserted: Federalism was the shadow of Repeal, he could not get nearer to it or farther from it.

In conclusion I intimated in studiously courteous language that his unexpected change of opinion did not involve, and must not be supposed to involve, any corresponding change in the opinions of the National party.

"I do not gather from your letter that if you settled down into a preference for Federalism you contemplate proposing the adoption of that principle by the Association. I earnestly hope you do not. Either the adoption or rejection of it would be an evil; the rejection as a breach of discipline towards the leader of the movement; the adoption on many serious grounds. The overwhelming majority of the members joined as Repealers; it would be all but impossible to collect their individual suffrages on the proposed change, and no chance meeting at Conciliation Hall would be entitled to alter the fundamental principle upon which the body was organised and supported. The Committee of the Association is no more entitled to abrogate its constitution than the Irish Parliament was entitled to surrender its own functions. The great constituency outside in both cases

is the body in whom the power resides. Such a change would fatally weaken the moral weight of the Association. In an individual a deliberate preference of a new opinion over an old one may argue candour and courage; in a nation it is generally a sign of weakness; and in our case, surrounded by enemies at home and abroad, it is sure to receive the worst interpretation."

A shrewd critic at the time summarised my remonstrance in a single sentence:—"Your proposal, if it be not checked, will ruin Federalism and ruin Repeal; and though you are the leader you shall not lead us to destruction."

The letter was universally reproduced and commented upon by the Press. O'Connell occupied a position in which he was sure to find writers to justify him, however flat a contradiction existed between his opinions to-day and his opinions yesterday; but it is creditable to the bulk of the Repeal journals that the prestige of his name, and the long and wholesome habit of awaiting his counsel, did not prevent them from declaring their dissent with sufficient plainness. They were divided between surprise that after nearly half a century's familiarity with the question he should still be in doubt upon the character and powers of the legislature he desired to establish, and a tacit conviction that he must have some worthy, though unknown and incomprehensible, motive for the course he adopted. Nearly half of the leading journals declared or implied that they were not ready to welcome the projected change; a few pronounced it to be the height of wisdom, and the rest proposed to wait for further developments, which from the sagacity and experience of O'Connell they did not doubt would justify his course. Only one writer complained that I had submitted the question to public scrutiny. The *Pilot* could not conceive why a journalist need trouble himself with fantastic notions and crotchety objections when the leader had spoken; if any publicist took so unwarrantable a course it must—it was manifest to Mr Barrett—be for some unworthy motive.[1]

The Whig and Tory Press in Ireland pounced upon O'Connell's confession with shrieks of exultation. The latter saw in it the disruption of the National party; the former the beginning of an alliance between the Repealers and the Whigs. There was an end, the Ministerial journals declared, of Repeal. Federalism was the device of

[1] A *précis* of the opinions of journals which spoke with some special authority or responsibility on the question at issue will help to realise the state of mind in which the controversy found the country; and such a *précis* will be found in the Appendix.

a defeated demagogue to escape from an untenable position. It was the first symptom of a foul compact with the Parliamentary Opposition to displace the Government and barter Irish votes anew for concessions and patronage. They quoted his declaration at Tara in August '43, that twelve months would not pass before an Irish Parliament was sitting in College Green, and his announcement before entering Richmond that it would come in six months, if peace were preserved; and scornfully demanded where was his Parliament, now that the promised time had arrived. They reminded the *Nation* that no newspaper on the popular side had opposed him and lived, and they predicted that he would first destroy the men who were in earnest, and then make over the *débris* of the Repeal party to the Whigs.

The tone of the Whig journals was calculated to strengthen the suspicion which the Tories sought to sow. The *Evening Post* was then edited by a man who had apparently been a serviceable ally of O'Connell in the Catholic Association, but had passed over to the Whigs when they came into power in 1830, and openly occupied the position he had long secretly held, of a stipendiary writer for the Castle.[1] He had assailed O'Connell with the foulest ribaldry during the first Repeal Agitation. "Paid Patriot," "Big Beggarman," and a host of similar amenities were of his invention; and it was well understood that his journal existed on the secret service money with which it was fed when his patrons were in power. This gentleman was enthusiastic for O'Connell's new proposal, and indignant that it should be subjected to criticism. He demanded triumphantly whether, if O'Connell asked the Association to substitute Federalism for Repeal, Mr Duffy contemplated the possibility of its rejection. The *Monitor*, also a Whig journal, but understood to be free from official influence, and, if controlled at all, to be only controlled by Mr Purcell, aimed to become the organ of Federalism, and treated O'Connell's advance towards that safe and practical doctrine as a new point of departure in Irish politics. The bulk of the Whigs held the same language. Mr Crawford and his associates desired a Federal Union because it embodied their idea of a permanent connection between England and Ireland. But as always happens in political parties, there were others who desired that Federalism should be proposed whatever might finally become of it, because it was a party convenience of the hour. In truth, it was a question of political existence with the Irish Whigs. A general election

[1] Frederick William Conway. See M'Carthy's "Early Days of Shelley."

was expected; and if they faced a general election without coming to an understanding with the National party, it might be doubted whether a single Whig would remain in Parliament for an Irish constituency. But this was far from being their only motive. Living under the influence of Irish opinion, which they could not avoid sharing, familiar with the contemptuous and empirical treatment of Irish questions in Parliament, they longed for some arrangement which would satisfy their conscience and honour as Irish gentlemen, without forfeiting their party relations at headquarters.

The Whig leaders in England, who have been charged with secretly abetting the hopes of the Federal party, gave no colour for this belief by the tone of their party organs. They not merely repudiated the policy of the Irish section, but mercilessly unveiled its motives. The *Morning Chronicle* declared that no sensible observer of Irish politics would be more taken in by the delusion of Federalism than by the defiance of Repeal; but with a view to a general election, an agitation for electoral purposes might be carried on with greater effect than in the name of Repeal, especially if any Liberals of weight could be induced to head it. Mr O'Connell was a more safe and more liberal guide than Mr Duffy; but much good would ensue from the discussion of Federalism, which could not fail to show the evil and absurd results not only of that theory but of Repeal. The Whig journals in Ulster sided with the English rather than the Irish leaders. They lent no aid to the Federal movement, although it was known that a private conference was being held in Belfast at that time between Mr Crawford and some of his political friends to launch the question. The *Northern Whig* was neither for Repeal nor Federalism; but a public mind was the great want of Ireland, and the independence exhibited in the manifesto of the Young Ireland party in the *Nation* was therefore a subject of no ordinary satisfaction. The *Banner of Ulster*, organ of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, was persuaded that Mr O'Connell would carry the Association to any course he might suggest, and that the Young Irelanders could offer no effectual resistance.

The controversy was taken up by the French Press. *Le National*, as might be expected, was indignant at any backward movement; but even the cautious *Journal des Débats* declared that O'Connell's letter was the funeral oration of Repeal. The controversy also extended to America, but before the American journals reached Ireland the question was disposed of in an unexpected manner.

While this controversy raged in the Press, an absolute silence on the

subject was maintained in the Association, where the public business was managed by Maurice O'Connell in the absence of his father and Smith O'Brien. I thought it prudent in the interest of the National cause, and courteous towards O'Connell, to exhibit a similiar reticence in the *Nation* till the question had ripened for some decision. For two numbers, which in the feverish state of the public mind covered a period that seemed interminable, the question was not revived, except by copying the comments of leading journals on both sides of the controversy. In the meantime most of my colleagues had returned to town and unanimously approved of the course I had taken.[1] Tory journals in Ireland, and Chartist journals in England, conducted by men who hated O'Connell with personal malignity, shrieked that the *Nation* was dumb, that it was cowed, that O'Connell had threatened it with extinction and privately whipped it into submission. It was not necessary to notice these pleasant inventions, but when the *Pilot*, so long the personal organ of Mr O'Connell, chuckled over some insinuation of the same character, the time to speak had come. The next *Nation* contained two articles on the state of public affairs. In one of them Davis said :—

"But, then, O'Connell is a Federalist! Well, if he be, as his letter seems to say, what reason is that for discouragement? Ireland is for Repeal; the Association is and will remain the Repeal Association; and if the people go on organising and educating they can carry Repeal. The

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[1] It is probable that Davis would have confined himself to private remonstrance; but when the resistance was publicly made he triumphed in its success. On reading O'Connell's letter he wrote to O'Brien from the North, where he was at the moment: —"O'Connell's letter is very able of its kind, but it is bad policy, if not worse, to suddenly read his recantation. He insulted the Federalists, then patronised them, then refused to tolerate them in Parliament unless they joined the Association, and now he discovers they are right all out, and of course they were right all through. My opinion is, you know, what I have always avowed in the *Nation*—namely, that Federalism is not, and cannot be, a final settlement, though it deserves a fair trial and perfect toleration. I believe there would be no limit to our nationality in twenty years whether we pass through Federalism or—[a blank in the original letter]. I write by this post to John O'Connell, urging his father not to repeat his opinions at least till Federalists do something." (Cahermoyle Correspondence.) Barry, who had great authority on practical questions, wrote his immediate assent to the course taken. "I was greatly gratified at the stand made by you against Federalism in the *Nation*. . . . I have of late been considering in every way the project of a Federal Union, and I conceive it to be an entire and absolute delusion. I am delighted with the latter part of your letter—your suggestion that the Association may reject the proposition if laid before it for adoption, that the great leader may not find it a mere machine to turn to whatever purpose may suit his notion at the moment. One thing I am resolved on, that is, that if the Association passes any vote changing its character to a Federalist body, I will at once resign as a member of it, and wait till better and more honest men arise in the country to seek Repeal, or something more, in a more independent fashion.—M. J. Barry, Cork, 23rd October 1844."

Federalists have put out no plan. . . . It is doubtful if they will. They are amiable and able men, but they are agreed on nothing. Some are for a House of Peers—some against it; some, whom O'Connell perhaps was thinking of, would make the Irish Parliament supreme in purely Irish affairs; many of them would deprive it of all commercial, ecclesiastical, and constitutional power—most probably they will do nothing. The aspiration of Ireland is for unbounded nationality. To the policy of this we are sure O'Connell will return. God grant that he soon may."

In the other article I answered briefly some criticisms on my letter; and with respect to the imputed motive of the silence maintained in the *Nation* for the previous fortnight, I said:

"The legitimate leader of the movement was not more willing to lead than we to follow; we proclaimed strict obedience and discipline as essential to success, and we practised them; for where there are many captains the ship sinks. But at all times, and now not less than any other time, we stood prepared to hold our own opinion against him upon a vital question (such as the present) as freely as against the meanest man of the party. We do not run all risks with a hostile Government, in proclaiming day by day weighty and dangerous truths, to abandon the same right under any other apprehension. O'Connell is incapable of playing the tyrant in the fashion these gentlemen suppose, and if he were not, we are incapable of submitting to tyranny. Let it be understood, then, that our opinions are unchanged, and unchangeable for personal motives, or under personal influence."

One member required to have his name withdrawn from the Association; he could not, he said, hope to stem the current of public opinion guided by Mr O'Connell, but, remembering how fatally a compromise on the tithe question had paralysed public opinion, he would not by remaining lend any countenance to a new compromise. One seceder was not much; but it might be that he was only the first; in the Alpine regions the fall of a fragment of frozen snow no bigger than a musket ball threatens an avalanche.

In the following week the silence of the Association was broken by letters from Smith O'Brien and O'Connell. O'Brien, who had scrupulously withheld himself from all party relations and preached forbearance and conciliation on all sides, avowed his personal preference for Repeal, as more easily attainable and more useful when attained than any Federal constitution which could be devised. But he was not prepared to reject any plan for repealing the Union which should appear to be more practicable and more satisfactory to all who might fairly claim to be parties to the adjustment of the question.

O'Connell's letter took a shape which gave his enemies an excuse for bantering him, which they were not slow to use. The remonstrance in

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the *Nation* had been the subject of comment in nearly every journal of political importance in the three kingdoms; but none of these comments apparently attracted his notice. His letter was addressed to the local paper published in his county town, and on its objections his attention was concentrated. The editor of the *Kerry Examiner* had misapprehended the precise nature of the Constitution of Eighty-two, and O'Connell read him a lecture on the danger of treating subjects on which he was imperfectly informed. The occasion, however, enabled him to offer some general observations to the country which were well timed.

"I have read," he said, "your article headed 'Federalism,' and I feel very much obliged to you for the civil and kind things which you have said of me in that article. To be sure, I have been working for upwards of forty years in the popular cause, and though I have often opposed the popular sentiment for a time, one way or the other the people have come round to my opinion, and such temporary disagreement has only tended to augment the public confidence. If there be any difference of opinion between me and the people at large on the present occasion—which I am not disposed to believe—yet the time is not come when any explanations can be given or any received, for this simple reason that up to the present moment there is no plan of Federalism before the public."

It was for the "federative plan" he had expressed the preference out of which the controversy arose; and if it were sufficiently developed to be approved of, it might be assumed that it was sufficiently developed to be disapproved of. But the last sentence of his letter gave so much satisfaction that all disposition to criticise its details was lost. "Whatever," he said, "shall be the result (of an investigation of the Federal plan when proposed), you may easily venture to believe that I for one will never consent to receive less for Ireland than she had before. I am ready to accept as much more for her as I can possibly get."

The writers of the *Nation*, who hated dissension as the worst evil short of dishonour, promptly accepted this declaration as putting an end to all differences: Federalism was all along "an open question," and so let it remain; but the object of the Association was the re-establishment of the Constitution of '82.

"We shall," Davis said, "rejoice at the progress of the Federalists because they advocate national principles and local government. Compared with Unionists, they deserve our warm support; but not an inch further shall we go; principle and policy alike forbid it. Let who will taunt or succumb, we will hold our course. No anti-Irish organ shall stimulate us into a quarrel with any national party; no popular man or influence shall carry us

into a compromise. Let the Federalists be an independent and respected party, the Repealers an unbroken league—our stand is with the latter." [1]

Meanwhile the Federalists showed no disposition to accept O'Connell's overtures. Mr Crawford, in a confidential and affectionate letter to O'Brien, passed the harshest judgment on them.

"He wants," he said, referring to a former transaction, "he wants to take the same undignified course, humbugging both Repealers and Federalists; trying to make the Repealers believe they are Federalists and the Federalists that they are Repealers; and keeping a delusive joint agitation, knowing right well that whenever particulars came to be discussed they would split up like a rope of sand. I conceive that the principles of '82 and those of a Federal constitution are so essentially different that it is impossible for the supporters of each to work together, unless one gives way to the other." [2]

But Mr Crawford did not confine himself to the confidential expression of his dissatisfaction. In a series of letters describing his plan of a Federal Union, he permitted himself to be drawn aside by the taunts of Tory journals, that he was playing the game of a man whom he had recently condemned. "It was true," he said, "that he had condemned the course taken in the Tithe question, and he should still condemn it. He considered the junction of Mr O'Connell and some of the Irish members under his influence with the Whigs on that occasion a stain on the records of Irish proceedings." If sensible men are striving for a common end, they dwell upon points of agreement, not on points of difference; but this indiscretion was what any one who knew Sharman Crawford might have foreseen. The weak and strong parts of his

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[1] I find by a letter in the Davis Papers that I had to go to London to keep a term as a law student at this date, and thus the controversy which I opened was taken up by Davis. Before starting I wrote to him:—"Dillon and J. O'H. have been here to counsel two things, the suppression of MacNevin's letter (on Young Ireland) as a pamphlet, and the receiving of O'Connell's last letter as a full declaration for Repeal, as the *Freeman* has done. Dillon, who is anxious, will speak to you about this himself. I am inclined to agree with him. All we can hope from O'Connell is a *practical* return to Repeal; a verbal confession of error is out of the question. Dillon justly argues that if we treat him captiously we will have no sympathy from the people, who want to see him right, but don't want to see him scolded. . . . I wrote to MacNevin to suppress his pamphlet, if it be printed, and that I would pay any expense incurred. You ought to see that he does this for prudence' sake. . . . I don't think it would be wise to make the letter the subject of the leading article—it would be helping to cut off his retreat, which is not our object. Treat him to a brevier sub leader. I send you some materials for 'Answers,' and I sent several to the printer. I sent also poetry enough for the number, and Dr Madden's sketch for a literary leader. Pray read the proofs. I will finish 'Tow row row' on my way to London, as so popular an air ought not to be missing."—Davis Papers. Duffy to Davis.

[2] Nov. 1844, Crawford to O'Brien.—Cahermoyle Correspondence.

character alike forbade any cordial union with O'Connell. He was proud, punctilious, and angular, unlikely to forget past affronts, and more solicitous to be conspicuously right than to be successful. O'Connell was not implacable, and could even be magnanimous in personal controversy; but this maladroit revival of an old quarrel affronted him. In a letter to the Association he regretted that Mr Crawford should, as usual, have gone out of his way to attack him, but he heartily forgave him, and only lamented that the Federalism described in his letter should be so wholly worthless.

"I may be greatly mistaken, but, as far as I can form a hasty opinion, Mr Crawford's plan seems to me to be an elaborate scheme to make matters worse than they are at present, and to reduce Ireland from a nominal equality with England to a real and vexatious provincial degradation."

O'Connell's return from Darrynane was celebrated by public entertainments in Tipperary and Limerick, to which I was invited; and Doheny, who lived on the route, was anxious on grounds of public policy that I should attend.

"Will Duffy come down to our festival?" he wrote to Davis. "I think he ought, if it be at all possible. There is no doubt of there being sedulous attempts made to persuade the people that we are distrusted by O'Connell. I invited Dan here to dine and sleep, not without some hope that you and Duffy would be able to come and meet him. Could ye do so? Besides the pleasure it would give myself, I am sure it would be useful to our friends and the country. There seems to be a public estrangement between ourselves and O'Connell. But without reasoning the thing, I am sure of its value. Say you'll come, and let me hear where Duffy is?" [1]

Doheny reported later that the Federal controversy had produced a fermentation of opinion in the district. Immediately after the Limerick dinner he wrote to me:—

"Your name was received with the loudest cheers; to such a degree indeed as, in my mind, to rouse the great man's wrath. But although the reception was most flattering, still there is a strong feeling that the *Nation* was wrong in intimating that Dan had abandoned the cause. To be sure, most men who entertain that feeling have not inquired into the justice or the value of the argument in the *Nation;* they content themselves with saying that it is necessary to preserve the inviolability of his character."

On 25th November O'Connell returned to the Association. His first task was to assert and justify himself. He replied to the critics who had discussed his Federal letter, passing lightly over the objections of Irish writers, but falling with intense bitterness on English and

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[1] Doheny to Davis, Cashel, September 10, 1845.

French journals. The Whigs were never, he affirmed, so hated in Ireland as now, and the reason was to be found in the conduct of their newspapers.

"It was to be found in the solemn insolence of the *Morning Chronicle*, the slanderous mummery of the *Examiner*, and the stupidity of Lord Palmerston's paltry *Globe*, which turned the just aspirations of the Irish people into unholy mockery. Even the Press of Louis Philippe took up the cry. Odillon Barrot's *National* began; but the Repealers were lovers of monarchical government and were Christians, two unpardonable offences in the eyes of the *National*. Thiers' paper, the *Constitutionnel*, joined the cry. He was glad to have the animosity of such a man. Next came the *Journal des Débats*, which said, 'Let not O'Connell and Ireland imagine that in case of a war with England they would get assistance from France.' He hurled his contempt on the paltry usurper Louis Philippe and his newspapers. He would not accept Repeal at the hands of France. Sooner than owe anything to France, he would surrender the cause of the country he loved best in the world. It was likely the *National*, the *Constitutionnel*, and the *Débats* were not scoundrels for nothing. They gave money's worth to England, and they probably got money value in return."

But though O'Connell reprimanded his critics, he amended as far as possible the blunders they had exposed. He broke decidedly, and even rudely, with the Federalists.

"After the liberation of the State prisoners," he said, "advances had been made to him by men of large influence and large property, who talked of seeking Repeal on what they called the Federal plan. He inquired what the Federal plan was, but nobody could tell him. He called upon them to propose their plan; the view in his own mind being that Federalism could not commence till Ireland had a Parliament of her own, because she would not be on a footing with England till possessed of a Parliament to arrange her own terms. The Federalists were bound to declare their plan, and he had conjectured that there was something advantageous in it, but he did not go any further; he expressly said he would not bind himself to any plan. Yet a cry was raised, a shout was sent forth, by men who doubtless thought themselves fitter to be leaders than he was, and several young gentlemen began to exclaim against him, instead of reading his letter for explanation. It was not that they read his letter and made a mistake, but they made the mistake and did not read the letter. He had expected the assistance of the Federalists, and opened the door as wide as he could without letting out Irish liberty. But," he continued, "let me tell you a secret: Federalism is not worth that (snapping his fingers). Federalists, I am told, are still talking and meeting—much good may it do them; I wish them all manner of happiness; but I don't expect any good from it. I saw a little trickery on the part of their 'aide-de-camp,' but I don't care for that; I have a great respect for them. I wish them well. Let them work as well as they can, but they are none of my children; I have nothing to do with them."

If the writers of the *Nation* desired controversy, here was a tempting thesis. If they desired a personal triumph, here was a signal victory. It might have been asked: If no one could tell him what their plan was,

"HB." *Sketches*, No. 822.]

THE POKER TRICK.

O'Connell, Sharman Crawford and Gavan Duffy.

how came he to give the "Federal plan" a preference over simple Repeal, which he had been discussing for thirty years? It might have been easily shown that these young men, of whose rashness he complained, asked to have no more done than he himself now found it necessary to do, to satisfy public opinion. They asked even less, for they did not want to have the Federalists treated with levity or incivility. The suggestion that he expected the Union to be first repealed, and an Irish Parliament established, before Federalism came to be mooted between the countries, was a text upon which they could have scarcely trusted themselves to write; for it was cynical experiments like this which had reduced O'Connell's influence over the educated classes so low. But instead of having recourse to any of these themes, they uttered no personal complaint and no note of triumph, but urged the whole party on to a campaign of renewed hope and restored confidence.

The contest was celebrated by an H.B. caricature, the substitute in that day for Mr Punch and his numerous family. It represented O'Connell dropping a poker inscribed "Federalism," which had become suddenly red-hot by a touch from the sword of Harlequin, whose cap is made from a copy of the *Nation*, and whose sword is inscribed "Young Ireland"

Looking back at these events, it cannot be concealed that O'Connell's treatment of the Federalists was a series of mistakes throughout. They were doing important work by leavening new classes with the national sentiment; they should have been encouraged, applauded, and left unmolested. His proposal to unite with them, and even to subordinate his opinions to theirs, was made without having taken the obvious precaution of ascertaining their wishes. Their aversion to such a union arose, perhaps, in some cases, from personal feelings; but in the main it sprung from the belief that the great Tribune would frighten away the very recruits whom they hoped to win. Had he quietly withdrawn from his negotiations at this point, the Federalists would still have done useful work for the national cause. But he withdrew in a tempest of wrath and scorn, and from that hour the hope of assistance from the Northern Federalists was at an end. It is the task of men of genius to show the people its own wishes, often imperfectly understood, and the way to realise them. The movements which have changed the fate of nations have always been the work of a man, or of a few men, in the first instance. But these men cannot undo their own work. Whenever they have attempted to do so, they have fallen like Mirabeau and Dumouriez.

Hampden could not have turned back the people of England, nor Washington the people of America, nor Kosciusko the people of Poland, from the goal to which he was their leader; nor could O'Connell have turned back the people of Ireland.

And we now know beyond controversy what was little suspected at the time, that the plan he had under consideration was the meanest and feeblest form of Federalism anywhere seriously proposed. In a confidential letter to O'Brien, full of exaggerated professions of confidence, which have borne the test of time but indifferently, he sent him the plan in question, and urged him, on a variety of grounds, to give it a favourable consideration. This letter was written a week after he had opened the subject to the Association, and a day or two after the newspaper containing my remonstrance had reached Darrynane. After a quarter of a century it has become historic, and I leave it without comment to justify the alarm-bell rung in the *Nation*.[1]

Simple persons have sometimes inquired in latter times, "Why did you reject Federalism? Was it not better than nothing? Wasn't it a good beginning of all you hoped to win?" No doubt; but what we rejected was not Federalism, which no one proffered, but the first step in a retreat upon a new Whig alliance. The combination O'Connell suggested was a moral impossibility. The very suggestion that he and the Repeal party would become Federalists gave Federalism a blow from which it never rallied. An eminent Whig barrister, since a judge,[2] who was asked later, "What has become of the Federal party?" described their fate graphically and accurately. "O'Connell," he said, "jumped on board our boat and swamped it."

The Federal episode thus ended, men became eager to hear what was to be done to carry forward the national cause. At the succeeding meeting of the Association[3] O'Connell spoke at great length, but the only practical measures on which he touched were two originated by the General Committee while he was in prison. He recommended attention to the registry with a view to a general election, and the systematic extension of Repeal Reading-rooms. It is impossible to doubt that at this time the luminous intellect, which for more than a generation had been like a lamp to the feet of his people, was clouded by disease. The

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[1] O'Connell's letter to Smith O'Brien will be found in the Appendix.
[2] Baron Deasy.
[3] Repeal Association, Dec. 2, 1844.

time when he was resourceful and electric with ideas was quite gone. He took up lightly the suggestions of others, and contributed none of his own. A week later, he again spoke at great length, retorting bitterly on the English newspapers which had assailed him for breaking with the Federalists, but making no reference to any policy for advancing the cause. Among the English journals his chief complaint was against the *Examiner*, then edited by Mr Fonblanque, whom he charged in language of extravagant censure with being indifferent to truth when it served his purpose to lie.

> "The bribed wretch who made this truculent attack upon him complained, forsooth, of the violence of his language, because he had called him a liar and a miscreant. Yet the scoundrel had neither proved his charge nor withdrawn it, when time for mature reflection had been granted him."

These were not the opinions which any of his educated audience entertained of Mr Fonblanque or of the French journals. But it was not desirable to begin a new controversy on a subject so far removed from the business of the Association. Controversy was sure to come without seeking it; for invectives so unmeasured against critics at a distance, accompanied by singular forbearance towards the critics at home who had begun the controversy, was not natural: and no one of any foresight could doubt that the punishment of the latter was only postponed. One thing at any rate was plain, the opportunity afforded by the defeat of the Government on the writ of error was lost. We had won the battle, but we had not known how to improve the victory. The precious opportunity which does not return was lost in a barren negotiation with suspicious allies. The movement began to lag, for the lassitude of a leader soon communicates itself to the cause. The English Press exaggerated the check, and insisted that it amounted to a disaster. But the people of Ireland had not changed their mind. They were still resolved to obtain the control of their own affairs, and though they were distressed and perhaps dismayed at the recent turn of events, their determination to succeed in the end had not slackened. The Young Irelanders uttered no complaint, but applied themselves to make the best of existing circumstances. Whatever O'Connell might do, or leave undone, their duty was the same; and some of them might hope to outlive him a quarter of a century.

The Federal movement languished under the hostility of the Whig leaders and the controversy between Crawford and O'Connell. To Smith O'Brien, who was at Cahermoyle, Davis wrote at this time:—

"All chance of a Federal movement is gone at present, and mainly because of O'Connell's public and private letters; yet I am still doing all in my power to procure it, for I wish to cover O'Connell's retreat. He is too closely bound up with Ireland for me ever to feel less than the deepest concern for his welfare and reputation."[1]

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[1] Cahermoyle Correspondence. The students of history will find the opinions of the Irish Press on O'Connell's Federal proposal an interesting and essential part of the narrative, as illustrating the condition and character of public opinion in Ireland at that time. They are printed in the Appendix.

CHAPTER IV.

RELIGIOUS INTRIGUES, AT HOME AND ABROAD.

THE punishment of the Young Irelanders came in a shape no one had foreseen. Subsequent events show that at this time it was determined to render them odious to the people and drive them out of the Association. They were to be represented as "the secret enemies of the Church and the Liberator." Mr John O'Connell was probably the author; he was at any rate an active agent of this project. His father, who in feeble health and hopes had fallen under his influence, permitted, and in the end abetted, the scheme. What was best as well as what was worst in the nature of O'Connell was easily enlisted in a design like this. He was above all things the Catholic champion, and an imputation of secret hostility to the Church naturally called him to arms; he was very jealous of his personal authority; he had often encountered turbulent and envious spirits during forty years of agitation, and sometimes found himself pressed hard by honest rivalry, and he was never scrupulous of the means to be employed in freeing himself of such embarrassment. With Mr John O'Connell, who united a stealthy ambition to a narrow intellect, the motive was different. He was "the Young Liberator"—so his flatterers were accustomed to style him—predestined to inherit the Tribune's wreath. The human mind is so prompt to deceive itself that it is impossible to affirm that he had no faith in the stories he propagated; but I am persuaded, from a close observation of his career, that his main motive was dislike of the brilliant young men whose gifts made his feebleness and mediocrity painfully conspicuous, and a conviction that he could not rule where they were his competitors. At a later period, as we shall see, his more generous brother pronounced that "John had done it all." Had these young men been assailed in the Association, they were very certain to defend themselves; and the most distinguished of the recent recruits would have taken part with them. Had they been assailed for their real sin, the share they took in the recent controversy on Federalism, the bulk of the Association and the country had already ranged them-

selves on their side. But there were other methods by which they might be more securely and effectually attacked. Whispers began to circulate against them in various parts of the country at the same time, so uniform in their character as to bespeak a common origin. These young men, it was said, with sad shakes of the head, were unfortunately quite indifferent to religion; nay more, they were the enemies of religion, and in fine, they wanted to introduce the license of French principles into Irish politics. They were jealous of the Liberator; then, they were the enemies of the Liberator; and, after a while, they wanted to displace the Liberator and throw the country into confusion. It is often the curse of a distinguished man to be surrounded by slaves and sycophants who exaggerate his prejudices, and this class was not wanting about O'Connell, who had lent his countenance to some of the least reputable men in Parliament and at the Press. To these men the unstained lives of the Young Irelanders were a constant reproach, and they took up the new device *con amore*. The staff of professional agitators, the veterans who were receiving salaries for nominal services, and the ill-used gentlemen whose sinecures had been threatened, swelled the chorus. The Press threw out mysterious hints of danger. The honest *Pilot* was alarmed to think that there were persons prominent in the national movement whose religious opinions were not sound; and various local "Pilots" echoed the warning. It is not wonderful that a serious impression was made upon many pious and upright men, especially among the senior clergy, by charges so skilfully and authoritatively circulated. The main body of the young priests rejected them with scorn, and among laymen under thirty they had no partisans. The young men felt in the first instance a mixture of amazement and contempt. Davis was the person chiefly pointed at, and they refused to believe that doubts could arise in any honest mind respecting the intentions of one so transparently pure and upright, so free from all taint of *finesse* or double-dealing, and whom they knew to be among the most unselfish of God's creatures. But Davis himself did not regard the danger lightly. At the beginning of the Federal controversy a professor of Maynooth, who certainly had no share in the conspiracy, for he was open and bold and quite incapable of baseness of any sort, wrote a letter to one of the national journals[1] complaining of a dangerously uncatholic tone in the writings of the *Nation*. In his case the alarm was honestly entertained,

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[1] To the *Weekly Register* (which had outlived the *Morning Register*, of which it was an offshoot). He wrote under the signature of "An Irish Priest."

but it was founded on complete ignorance of the men, and was stimulated at the moment, half unconsciously, by criticisms on writings in the *Dublin Review* in which he had peculiar interest. I answered him in the same journal, not unsuccessfully, and the controversy left us personal friends. He proved, indeed, in later difficulty and peril a friend worthy to have been won on a generous field of battle. Father Meehan, as one who shared our principles and aims, and knew the men concerned, repudiated the charge publicly, and other young priests made light of it. But Davis feared the influence of such debates on the uneducated people, and in another sense on the educated class who still held aloof. He wrote to O'Brien indicating the danger and the remedy:—

"I entreat of you," he said, "to write to O'Connell requiring some disavowal, or at least a stop to the bigoted attacks on the *Nation*. I wrote that a man had as good a right to change from Catholicity to Protestantism as from Protestantism to Catholicity, and called the State Trial miracle 'mock,' and censured the Italian censorship. I shall do so again; and I shall never act with a party that quarrel with such opinions. I will not be the conscious tool of bigots. I will not strive to beat down political, in order to set up religious ascendancy. You, unless I have much mistaken you, will subscribe to what I now say. The Federalist leaders here go entirely with me, and, in fact, now or never, we Protestants must ascertain whether we are to have religious liberty. I have written to J. O'C. on this. My defence of D. O. Maddyn ("Ireland and its Rulers," Part III.) against the *Dublin Review* seems to have called out this attack. Is this to be endured? Is it even politic to endure it?"[1]

On the same day he wrote to me on the same subject:—

"I have written to J. O'Connell, O'Brien, etc., by this post to stop the lies of the bigot journals. I have done so less even on account of the *Nation* (which can be steered out of the difficulty in three weeks without any concession) than to ascertain whether the lay Catholics can and will prevent bigots from interfering with religious liberty. If they cannot, or will not, I shall withdraw from politics, as I am determined not to be the tool of a Catholic ascendancy, while apparently the enemy of British domination. Your Lawrence O'Toole is very strong and original, though I am not quite reconciled to the metre yet. The last *Nation* is excellent, and is another proof that after March next you will be able to let me retreat for a year on my History [of Ireland]. I have given up verses since I left Dublin, and feel as if I could not write them again; so leave plenty (for publication in the *Nation*) when you are going to London. I shall be up by the end of the week. Hudson and I took a sly trip through Monaghan, Leitrim, Roscommon, etc. I am tolerably well in body and in good spirits."

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[1] Dated Belfast, October 27th, 1844.—Cahermoyle Correspondence. He had gone to Belfast with Mr Eliot Hudson to confer with the Northern Federalists.

By this time the Federal controversy was at its height, and O'Connell was probably in no humour to reassure Davis. His answer to O'Brien's representation was general and vague. The upshot of it was that no harm would be done to the public cause. "I do not believe," he wrote, "that there is the least danger of bigotry tainting the Association. Not the least. I am thoroughly convinced that any sentiment of that kind would be scouted with unanimous execration."[1] Meanwhile warnings came from many quarters that the influence of the young men was being systematically undermined, and their speeches and writings misrepresented. In the beginning of November, Davis wrote to O'Brien, sending him country journals in which the attack had been reiterated, and others in which it was rebutted.

"All this might pass for newspaper hubbub, to be frowned at and forgotten, but I know that it is part of a system for stopping the growth of secular education and free discussion, and that it has been, and is again likely to be within this month, a subject of serious debate, whether the *Nation* and 'promiscuous education' and independent lay opinion should not be formally denounced by authority. I am not to a shilling's value proprietor of the *Nation*, and would be a much greater gainer by other literary pursuits, to say nothing of my profession, than writing for it, nor do I think its property would be much injured by such a denunciation were it met, as I trust it would be, with decent firmness and increased ability in the journal assailed. But I do fear that such an event would ruin Repeal. The Federalists to a man would stand by us in such a quarrel, and the desire now entertained by some of them to leave all ecclesiastical matters to an Imperial Parliament would become the fixed principle of all of them. . . . The same feeling prevails amongst the men represented by the *Warder*, and the least hint of what I have told you about the denunciation will at once change their tone. How far the separation of the individuals connected with the *Nation*, and those who would go with us in such a quarrel, from personal co-operation with O'Connell, would serve or hurt Repeal, deserves consideration. Finally, the question at issue is religious liberty. I for one will not sacrifice my right to it for any consideration. We are assailed for condemning the Roman Censorship, for praising the simplicity of Presbyterian tenets, for not believing 'O'Connell's miracle,' for appreciating William Carleton's genius while we condemned his early offences against the Roman Catholics, and finally for resisting all sorts of religious persecution, from brickbats to defamation. If I am to be set upon for these things, and the *Nation* officially denounced, or systematically run down for them, I pause ere I give any more help to put power into the hands of men with such intolerant principles. . . . Mr Hutchinson during my absence wrote to me to say he had spoken to Maurice O'Connell, who professed to agree with him as to the impolicy and injustice of these attacks; but in order to bring this matter to an end, and to enable Protestant Repealers to know where they are drifting, I would entreat of you to write without delay to O'Connell before worse things

[1] Cahermoyle Correspondence.

happen. . . . O'C.'s Federalism is self-contradictory. Two Supreme Parliaments! Bah!—that is not Federalism, or Porterism, nor anything but an apology for a guilty blunder.

"Of course you heard of his letter to Pierce Mahony to get up a Federalist declaration. This converted Pierce, who showed the letter all over Dublin. Not one influential Federalist would go into the same room with him; so between O'Connell's letter and his agent a Federalist declaration is very doubtful."[1]

Looking back on the facts in the perspective of over half a century, I do not insist that nothing was written in the *Nation* to which a censor might take legitimate exception. The writers were of various creeds; they were engrossed with political, not theological, questions; they aimed to unite the people, and naturally dwelt upon points of agreement rather than on points of controversy. But I do insist, with full knowledge of the circumstances, that there was not the faintest truth in the charges made against them of a design or desire to reject religious authority. In a community fed for generations on mutual prejudice they preached "a truce of the Lord," and it was because they did so that the cause had won so many important recruits. To discuss the tendency of writings is to embark in an interminable dispute, but I can speak confidently of motives and intentions. The passion for liberty, which had burned up the trivialities of youth and cleared their lives of foppery and licentiousness, left no room for sectarian animosities. But it would have been easier, I am persuaded, to have found among them, than among any group of their contemporaries, men who would have laid down their lives for their religious convictions. The influence of their writings has confessedly been to make the young men of their race for two generations more upright, truthful, and generous; if they have lessened the reverence of any one for the obligations of conscience or religion, I have never heard of such a case. The orthodoxy of a man, however, is like the chastity of a woman; a nod, a shrug, will bring it into question, and what can a modest woman or a pious man do to remove such a doubt? We can measure the morbid susceptibility of the religious sentiment when we remember that Montalembert was denounced from the pulpit of Notre Dame as a bad Catholic, and Walter Scott charged by the Evangelical Press of Edinburgh with promulgating Atheism.

O'Brien replied to Davis in terms which, read a generation later, must be recognised as just and reasonable in their general scope; but at the moment they were probably not a little exasperating, as an answer

[1] Cahermoyle Correspondence, Nov. 3, 1844.

to the warning of a danger which was imminent, and which might lay the national cause prostrate at the feet of its enemies.

"In compliance with your request," he said, "I have written to O'Connell requesting his intervention to put a stop to the discussions arising amongst the national party. I have read the letter of an Irish priest. It is very clever, very Catholic, and if unity were not essential, it would be a fair manifestation of opinion adverse to those promulgated by the *Nation*. I need not say I agree much more with the opinions of the writers in the *Nation* than with those of the Irish priest; but then you and I should remember that we are Protestants, and that the bulk of the Irish nation are Catholics. I foresee, however, that unless O'Connell is able and willing to act as a mediator on the present occasion we shall have a PRIEST and an ANTI-PRIEST party among the Catholics of Ireland. This I should much deplore. Unity is essential to our success, and therefore division at present would be madness; but even if Repeal were won, I should deeply regret such encroachments on the part of the clergy as would justify organised resistance, or, what is quite as bad, infidel hostility to all those feelings and opinions upon which religion rests. I make these observations without professing any sort of propagandism in regard of the matter of Faith, and as an uncompromising advocate of civil and religious liberty in its most unlimited sense."[1]

John O'Connell replied to similar remonstrances, and to a note on the Federal controversy, by some unctuous generalities which left the business where he found it.

"I need not in any way discuss the question of the letters of the 'Irish priest,' as my father has written to you on that subject; and I think I had better not interfere. Neither will I discuss the Federalist affair. My father is gone to town to show what his ideas, plans, and hopes are; and you have there the opportunity of discussing them with him, while I, in these remote parts, remain in waiting for his words to influence my opinions and acts. I am very sorry indeed to gather from your letter that neither your bodily health nor spirits are what I sincerely wish them. Take care you do not overwork both, as I strongly think you have done; especially the physical vigour. To judge from your sweet poetry, the powers of the mind in no way fail under their fatigue."[2]

But his father was sufficiently precise and specific. He wrote ten days after the Federal controversy had commenced, and the tone of his letter indicates how deeply he was offended. The writers in the *Nation* were, of course, entitled to disbelieve the State Trial Miracle and "every other miracle from the days of the Apostles to the present"; but Catholics must be left free to believe them, if they saw reason to do so. As to his using his influence to prevent the newspaper war, he had no

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[1] Davis Papers. Cahermoyle, Nov. 5, 1884. O'Brien to Davis.
[2] Davis Papers. John O'Connell to Davis, Darrynane, Nov. 16, 1844.

such influence. The *Nation* was wrong in the controversy with the *Review;* but he was only anxious that it should escape the possible consequences, and be lucrative and successful. As for his correspondent, he had a great regard for him and heartily forgave him the unfair insinuations which his note contained. "You are really an exceedingly clever fellow, and I should most bitterly regret that we lost you by reason of any Protestant monomania."[1]

No public notice was taken by the young men of these underhand proceedings; some faint echo of the subterranean controversy, however, appeared in the Conservative Press, which affirmed that for their success in the Federal controversy the Young Irelanders were about to be sacrificed.[2] But this was a result not so easily attained. The young men gathered round Davis with prompt loyalty. They insisted on his taking some part in the public business of the Association, that the people might come to know him; and his name for the first time began to appear in reports and speeches connected with some of the work he had done, which they would not consent any longer to ignore. MacNevin, who was deficient in reticence and easily moved with generous impatience, broke out in the Association and in the provincial Press in his direct defence;[3] but his other friends maintained a haughty but watchful silence. O'Brien insisted, however, on his taking the chair of the Association at one of the weekly meetings,[4] and the use he made of the occasion was characteristic. Instead of flattering the pride or the hopes of the people, he told them the stern truth that they would fail

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[1] This remarkable letter will be found in a note at the end of the chapter. By some Post Office accident it did not reach Davis for several weeks after its date, and has since lain hid for a whole generation.

[2] "Mr Duffy has already declared that he will not follow Mr O'Connell in his tergiversation, and the enthusiasts whose writings in his journal have given to the cause whatever dignity belongs to it will abide by him. Already, we are informed, have the engines of intolerance been set in motion to crush the *Nation*. The cry of infidelity has been raised. . . . The underlings of the faction are now denouncing its independence and prophesying its downfall; and we shall not be surprised if a few days bring us accounts that an open war is waged upon a journal that but a few months ago commanded a popularity unprecedented in Ireland."—*Morning Herald*. Mr Butt was at this time a contributor to the *Morning Herald*, and was presumably the writer of this article.

[3] "Woe to the country wherein could be found a single tongue to slander so pure, so upright, so earnest a man; one whose indomitable labour, whose wonderful information, and whose glorious enthusiasm are devoted without one thought of ambition or self to the elevation of Ireland; to the arduous task of doing what Mr Grey Porter calls raising our country."—Letter of MacNevin to *Belfast Vindicator*.

[4] "I must positively insist on your taking the chair next Monday. The time is come when you ought to act a prominent part in Irish affairs."—Davis Papers. O'Brien to Davis, Jan. 7, 1845.

ignominiously if they did not cultivate the qualities essential to success. No enrolment of members or collection of funds would win national liberty except on this condition.

"Trust me," he said, "that no men in the country have more clearly considered the greatness of English power and the animosity of English feeling towards Ireland than the men who are now in that box (the box reserved for the Committee), and who in the Committee-room upstairs laboured day after day to remove English rule from Ireland. Have you, before embarking in this great contest, looked to the magnitude of it? Have you clearly weighed that this power which you seek to get rid of has now ruled your country for six centuries; that it is an Empire with hundreds of thousands of soldiers in India, and with an extent of Canadian territory so large that from its face the whole surface of England and Ireland would not be missed; or are you men who have rashly entered perchance a quarrel—certainly a serious moral struggle—with such a power as this? If you are, and you are now looking upon these things for the first time, you will be beaten, and will deserve to be beaten; you will be trampled on by the British Minister. If you are cowards—if you are rash—if you are capricious men who shrink from long labour—I tell you you will be beaten and put down amidst the scorn of Europe, and you will deserve it. But if you have clearly considered the cost of what you are doing, if you are resolved that you will succeed, from this spot, in the name of my friends, in your name, I may tell the British minister to give up a contest in which he must eventually be beaten."

But events intervened which made any immediate conflict between the parties ill-timed and dangerous; the Association itself was in peril of losing its authority.

Before the meeting of Parliament political gossip was usually busy in forecasting the business of the session. It had leaked out in the great party clubs that something quite new would be attempted; something, it was mysteriously hinted, which would take Ireland out of the hands of O'Connell and the Repealers. The Whigs had jeeringly recommended Peel to try concession instead of coercion, and the whisper grew that he would improve on their hint; concessions of a large and practical character, addressed respectively to every great interest in the country, being in preparation. But this was not his only device for taking Ireland out of the hands of the Repealers; there were at the same time sinister rumours that he had prevailed on the Propaganda, through a confidential agent at Rome, to forbid the Catholic clergy from taking any further part in the national movement. Since the reign of Elizabeth the Government of England was forbidden by a penal law to hold direct communication with the Holy See; but the Stuarts openly or secretly—William III. through his continental allies, and the House of Brunswick by the agency of Hanover—had maintained a representative near the

Pope. A newspaper ordinarily well informed on Catholic interests[1] published correspondence from Rome strengthening these reports; and the Press which called itself Protestant repeated them, with malicious triumph over the discomforture of the Repealers.

The *Nation* met the double project promptly and frankly.

"If Peel, it was said, hoped to denationalise the Irish people by making them prosperous and contented, let him try, and he should have thanks and applause for every good measure, whatever was his motive in proposing it. If he hoped to coerce or trick Ireland by any arrangement with the See of Rome, as if the Irish were a handful of prisoners whom the Pope could surrender in chains to English vengeance, he was laying up for himself disappointment and disaster. The Court of Rome had learned a bitter lesson from the working of concordats granted to Protestant Governments, and were unlikely to concede another. But though all the parchment of Rome were granted to Downing Street, the Irish clergy would maintain that faith in Irish freedom which the sword of Cromwell and the gibbet and scourge of his successors had failed to extirpate. The story of a concordat was doubtful; let the truth be probed, let two delegates from the clergy, and two from the laity of Ireland, go to Rome and ascertain whether the English Minister sought to make the Vatican an ally of St James's against Ireland. If the story proved to be false, the lie might be flung in the face of the baffled intriguers; if it be proved to be true, if the Ministers, not content with trying to repeal the absurd statute of Premunire, and to open a Christian diplomacy at Rome, had frightened or deceived the Holy See into measures injurious to the independence of the Irish Church, the course of the people would be plain, and their blow decisive."

Mr O'Neill Daunt, whose presumed relations with O'Connell gave his action significance, opened the subject in the Association.

"A conspiracy," he believed, "was on foot to induce the Pope to prohibit the Catholic clergy from taking part in the Repeal movement. With what shameful inconsistency English statesmen acted! They required Catholics to swear that the Pope neither had nor ought to have any temporal authority in Ireland; and they were labouring underhand to induce him to exercise the very authority, the existence of which Catholics were required to deny upon oath.

"He did not believe that his Holiness would be induced to forget the just distinction between his temporal and spiritual power; but even supposing that improbable case, the people of Ireland would not forget it. Nor would the clergy of Ireland. If a rescript emanated from Rome denouncing the national movement, the Catholics of Ireland would treat it as so much waste paper."[2]

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[1] The *Freeman's Journal.* The information was understood to have come from Dr (afterwards Cardinal) Cullen, who represented many of the Irish bishops in their business with the Propaganda.

[2] Repeal Association, January 13th, 1845.

These rumours obtained unexpected confirmation by a letter from O'Connell to the Catholic Bishop of Meath.

"He warned the prelates of Ireland that Mr Petre, an English Catholic, was employed by Peel at Rome to negotiate a concordat which would give the English Government control over the Catholic hierarchy, in return for great concessions and liberal pecuniary assistance to the Catholics in British possessions abroad. Mr Petre was aided by an agent of the Austrian Government. This bait, he affirmed, had taken, and had already produced a letter from the Propaganda to Archbishop Crolly unfavourable to the Repeal Association. The strength of the English envoy consisted in the support of Austria, whose assistance was needed to repress insurrection in the Papal States and throughout Italy. Thus the British agent, backed by the Austrian, was almost irresistible with the politicians of the Court of Rome. To meet this intrigue, he recommended a deputation to Rome. The laity ought to send two delegates to insist that the Irish Catholics, in their struggle along with liberal Protestants for liberty, ought not to be impeded by any species of ecclesiastical censure or intervention whatever. He hoped some of the bishops might be sent on a similar deputation. They must meet the conspiracy and crush it for ever."

A deputation to Rome was the course previously recommended by the *Nation;* but O'Connell was no longer fruitful in device, even where he was greatly moved.

That some negotiations had been opened at Rome is certain, but they had not taken the precise shape which rumour attributed to them. The Lord Lieutenant was able to address a letter to Archbishop Murray, denying on the part of the Government that there ever had existed the intention of negotiating a concordat; and Archbishop Crolly, who published the letter he had received from the Prefect of the Propaganda,[1] declared at the same time that he would resist by every influence in his power the project of a concordat if any such project was meditated. The Prefect's letter restricted itself to questions of ecclesiastical discipline and conduct. It appeared by newspapers brought under the notice of the Holy See that speeches were made to the people at meetings and banquets, and even in churches, by certain of the priesthood, and by some of the bishops, which did not show them to be solely intent on the salvation of souls, and strangers to the strife of political parties or temporal engrossments. The Primate was directed to counsel ecclesiastics, especially those holding the episcopal office, whom he perceived in any degree wandering from these precepts.

Here were the specific orders of the Holy See speaking through the Propaganda; and a political philosopher, who made no allowance for

[1] Cardinal Fransoni.

the influence of human nature on human action, might infer from the discipline of the Catholic Church a prompt and strict submission. But the Irish bishops knew their countrymen much better than Peel or the Propaganda did. Had the policy of this rescript been peremptorily enforced it is certain, in the temper of the people at that time, that it would have been met by a storm of wrath and resistance. The majority of the bishops with commendable prudence evaded this catastrophe. They interpreted the letter of the Cardinal Prefect as censuring only the use of violent and intemperate language. They did not consider it incompatible with taking a moderate and prudent part in public affairs, and they continued to correspond with, and contribute to, the Repeal Association as before. The end it was designed to accomplish may be surmised from the conduct of the minority of the bishops, who accepted it as conveying a complete prohibition of attending any meeting or banquet for political purposes.[1]

The Duke of Wellington, who, in civil affairs at any rate, knew when he was beaten, admitted that this diplomatic stroke had failed. "O'Connell and his 'democracy,'" he said, "are too strong for the Roman Catholic nobility, gentry, and hierarchy, with or without the Pope."[2]

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[1] Letter of the Right Reverend Dr Cantwell, Bishop of Meath, to O'Connell.—*Nation*, January 18th, 1845.

[2] Conversation with Mr Raikes, September 1843.—*Raikes's Journal.* Negotiation with the Pope was a Whig not less than a Tory practice. Lord Palmerston a few years later wrote to Lord Minto (then at Rome, "not as a minister accredited to the Pope, but as an authentic organ of the British Government"): "We wish to make to the Pope the plain, simple, and reasonable request that he would exert his influence over the Irish priesthood to induce them to abstain from meddling in politics." And again, *apropos* of the provincial colleges, "You must say (to the Pope) that if he expects the English Government to be of any use to him, and to take any interest in his affairs, he must not strike blows at our interior."—Mr Evelyn Ashley's "Life of Lord Palmerston," vol. i., pp. 38 and 40.

CHAPTER V.

PEEL'S CONCESSIONS TO IRELAND.

To prepare for Peel's proposals now became necessary. O'Brien urged O'Connell to resume his place in the Association before Parliament met, and O'Connell assented with an effusion of confidence and gratitude. "*Aux ordres*, as they say in France. I cheerfully obey your commands, for your wish is to me a command. . . . Reckon, therefore, on my meeting you at the Association on Monday, and returning you thanks for your inestimable services. You literally are a living treasure to the cause." And again, on the question of attending Parliament: "Are we to go over? Decide for me, as well as for yourself, and if that decision be in favour of action—I mean, of course, of going over—I will leave this for Dublin immediately after I get your answer."[1] But when he arrived it was noted with dismay that he had nothing to propose, except the formal abandonment of the projects with which he had opened the renewed agitation.

"The Irish members would not bring the question of the State Trials before Parliament. The Whigs advised them to do so, but if the Whigs thought the experiment a good one let them make it themselves. What inducement was there to appeal to England? The Tory Press had, of course, attacked him, but the Whig Press had assailed him in a more truculent manner, and, so far from inciting the people of England to demand the impeachment of those who took part in the trial, they dissipated whatever feeling there might exist on the subject."[2]

At a subsequent meeting he submitted resolutions affirming that the hopelessness of obtaining redress from the Imperial Parliament made it useless to appeal to it; and that the Irish members by attending in

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[1] Cahermoyle Correspondence.—O'Connell to O'Brien, Jan. 1845.
[2] Repeal Association, Jan. 27.

Conciliation Hall would best further the restoration of a domestic legislature. O'Brien concurred in thinking the Repeal members would be more useful at home; but though he had originated this policy, he was not willing to push it to irrational extremes. Having Peel's new measures in view, they must, he said, be prepared to go to London whenever the exigencies of the country required it.

Parliament met, and the English minister's proposals became known. They were practical and substantial measures of relief. The education of the Catholic priesthood at St Patrick's College, Maynooth, was conducted with sordid economy, on a small annual grant, which at each renewal was made the subject of offensive controversy in the House of Commons. He proposed to increase the grant to a sum more adequate to the service, and to withdraw it from annual controversy by making it a permanent appropriation. The education of the middle classes in Ireland was in a shameful condition. The Protestants were in exclusive enjoyment of such endowed schools as existed; and they were few and ill regulated. The Catholic laity did not possess a single school subsidised by the State. He proposed to create colleges for the middle classes which would remove this reproach. In the previous year, as we have seen, he had appointed a Royal Commission to enquire into the condition of land tenure in Ireland; and it was intimated that a bill was in preparation founded on their report.

The *Nation* gave the promised reforms a frank welcome. The men whom it represented were not afraid of prosperity. It is not a prosperous people, they said, who bend their knees to subjection. On the contrary, out of wealth and leisure come the longing for nationality and the ambition to rule. The full yeoman and the successful merchant would not accept a domination which the shivering pauper and the ruined shopkeeper had spurned. Thrice welcome then was everything, great or small, which enriched the people or made them skilful and wise.

These concessions, and especially the Maynooth Grant, were very offensive to Irish Tories. Was Peel, they asked, again going to play the traitor? for to concede anything to the race they had so long wronged was treason to them. When an English minister was to be intimidated the stock resource with the Irish gentry was to murmur nationality, and there was now to be heard in unaccustomed places allusions to 1782, and the memory of Flood and Charlemont. Among the Protestant artisans, who were too simple and downright for diplomacy, and who had no interest to divide them from their fellow-

countrymen, these allusions began to be repeated with an emphasis the sincerity of which could not be mistaken. They were distracted by a painful struggle between the bigotry in which they had been bred and the nationality which was becoming so attractive, and they could not determine on a clear course. But it was plain they were on the move. Early in February a meeting was held in the Royal Exchange to devise means for encouraging Irish manufactures. In that hall, vacant because Irish trade was in decay, but where the statues of Grattan and Lucas forbade it to be forgotten that under its dome the business of a prosperous nation had once been transacted, a number of needy artisans and a few of the popular leaders assembled. O'Connell, O'Brien, Davis, and MacNevin came from the Repeal Association; Sir James Murray, and James Haughton, Dr Maunsell, and the Lord Mayor from the general body of citizens. Before the business commenced the Rev. Tresham Gregg, Grand Chaplain of the Orangemen, and the leader and idol of the "Protestant Operatives," entered the Exchange, and announced his intention of taking part in the proceedings. His speech was a curious image of the conflicting sentiments by which his party was agitated. The new sympathy for nationality found voice first. He came there, he said, with a heart glowing with affection for his country. Though he was popularly regarded as a man actuated solely by bigotry, he had no doubt that the meeting would give him a fair hearing and judge for themselves whether he was not as anxious as the most jealous among them to forward the interests of Ireland.

"He had heard it said that the Orange and Green must be combined together. He was identified with the Orange, but he dearly loved the Green. He believed in his conscience that Ireland was an ill-treated and ill-governed country. She had resources second to scarcely any State in Europe. He never visited England without being struck by the marked and painful contrast between the two countries. When he considered the great men who had made Ireland illustrious; when he remembered the patriotism of Grattan, the science of Berkeley, the noble intrepidity of Swift, the admirable gifts of Moore, and, coming to our own day, when he contemplated the genius and eloquence which week after week were displayed in the *Nation*, he found everywhere emanations of the Irish mind so marked by power that other countries might envy it. Looking from north to south, from east to west, he saw a people patient to suffer, active to labour, quick to conceive, bold to dare, a people second to none in the world whether for physical prowess or the more sublime attributes of the mind. Blessed with such advantages, inhabited by such a people, what was Ireland? A wagging of the head among the nations, a distracted, ill-used land, as noted for her sufferings as she was distinguished by her gifts. Ireland, instead of being a submissive province, might, if it so pleased the Almighty Ruler of things, stretch her sceptre over wide dominions."

This was speaking a language which found a joyful reception from his audience. But to remedy these evils Mr Gregg fell back upon his traditional opinions. Protestantism, being the established religion in Ireland, ought to be sustained; it was absurd of the Government, who, to his thinking, were a contemptible crew, to encourage systems opposed to it.

Out of this hybrid harangue each party took what suited it. O'Connell declared he had never listened to a better speech, and that for the rest of his life, let Mr Gregg do what he might, he would never utter a reproach. His own party recognised the old note of "Protestant Ascendancy," but missed the blare of "No Surrender," and were not altogether content. Mr Maxwell, a scion of the Farnham family, who probably saw with dismay the fictitious nationality of the gentry echoed in good faith by their retainers, refused to fulfil an engagement to preside at Mr Gregg's Protestant "Operative Society," because that gentleman had been guilty of the crime of associating with Repealers and Papists.

Early in April there was a most important evidence of the change in Protestant sentiment. Mr Grey Porter authorised Smith O'Brien to propose him a member of the Association, stipulating, however, for the strange condition that he should be at liberty to advocate an alternative to Repeal. His fine natural abilities, frank generous character, social position, and manly bearing (he was a handsome young squire in those days) would have rendered him a very important recruit, had these gifts been ballasted by a more solid judgment. But he wanted patience, and the habit of forecasting his course, and could not be counted on for a persistent policy. His first speech in the Association made an immediate impression by its openness and unreserve. He joined, he said, from no feeling of animosity towards the English people, but, on the contrary, with the strongest desire to promote union and intercourse of every sort between the two nations.

"Ireland had outgrown the treaty of Union made at a time when England treated the Irish as an inferior people; but a new Union might be framed which would recognise the independence of Ireland as a voluntary partner in the Hiberno-British Empire. This plan would be supported by many persons in England and Ireland who would never join the Repeal party. An unfair proportion of the public burden was thrown upon Ireland, and she could get no redress, because while in population she was as forty-five to a hundred and in territory as thirty-nine to a hundred, her members were only in the proportion of nineteen to every hundred and forty British members. And she was governed in a widely different spirit. The other day Sir Thomas Freemantle, on assuming the office of Chief Secretary,

confessed that he was unacquainted with the country he came to rule, but announced as his policy that Ireland must be governed like Yorkshire or Cornwall. How many votes would a candidate for Yorkshire get if he proposed that Yorkshire must be governed like Ireland? The inveterate prejudices which separated the Protestant gentlemen and yeomen of Ulster from their Catholic countrymen were in rapid process of dissolution. The Act of 1800 was daily losing favour in the eyes of the men of Ulster, and in the end, like their ancestors the volunteers of '82, they would follow the generous impulses of their hearts and stand up for Ireland."

Having secured the sympathy of his audience by this skilful exordium, he invited them to consider the difficulties of the position.

"The first and greatest difficulty was the unwillingness of many sensible men in Ulster and elsewhere to commit themselves to the national movement. They held back under the belief that the Association was a mere instrument in the hands of Mr O'Connell. But this was not the fact. Though the Duke of Leinster became a member, Mr O'Connell would still be the first man; he was the captain, they were his army; but that the Association was O'Connellite in the sense that he could turn it as he pleased to his own purpose, they utterly denied. It was the Council Chamber, where men of all creeds and classes could express their individual opinions frankly. The second reason why men of education and rank still kept aloof was because they only desired an Irish Parliament as a last alternative in case of the continued refusal of the London Parliament to redress the grievances of the country."

The third reason was quite different from the others, but it was the most important of all: it was the non-publication of the Repeal accounts. "He could not have joined the Association," he said, "but that Mr O'Connell gave him a distinct promise that the accounts should be published."

Such a frank and manly criticism, had it been followed up by corresponding action, might have produced important and even decisive results. But it was destined to have a different issue; after a few weeks Mr Porter retired from the Association as precipitately as he had joined it, and the engagement made to him was never carried out.

Before his coming, and after he left, the Repeal fund was a topic of constant uneasiness to the best men in the movement. O'Connell retained in his own hand the exclusive control of the immense receipts, on the ground that it was necessary to provide secretly for expenditure which the courts might pronounce illegal. The bulk of the people who contributed the money would probably have authorised him to take this course had they been appealed to. But they were not apprised of the arrangement, and this was the fatal weakness of his position. He had

broken with Mr Purcell, however, on the same question, and he could not be moved from his policy. He disposed of the funds doubtless in the manner which he considered most serviceable to the public cause, but the practice had the effect Mr Porter attributed to it, of sowing suspicion and sapping confidence. And it tortured men like O'Brien, Davis, and his comrades, none of whom would accept so much as a postage stamp from the fund. But they could not remedy the wrong except at the cost of destroying the Association. Some pious partisans of O'Connell, indeed, declared that their morbid anxiety on the subject was no better than Judas's hypocritical lamentation over Mary Magdalen's wastefulness when the precious ointment was poured at the feet of her Master.

A more stringent stimulus than Mr Porter's speech was applied to public opinion by the report of the Devon Commission.[1] The Commissioners were landed proprietors and Unionists, who had no sympathy or interest in popular agitation; but, half unconsciously, they unveiled a series of social phenomena like those which in Arthur Young's pages explain and palliate the subsequent horrors of the French Revolution. The destitute poor amounted to one-third of the entire population. Agriculture was the national pursuit, but the men employed in it were steeped in poverty and misery; and this poverty and misery were traceable to English law and the English connection as its fountain-head. Much of the land was held in principalities by absentees, mainly English peers, who were described as "regardless and neglectful of their properties in Ireland." The effect of the laws under which the bulk of the people had lived since the Revolution—laws framed or sanctioned by the English Privy Council—was "to create a feeling of insecurity which directly checked industry." The landowners, it was confessed, had trafficked mercilessly in the happiness and lives of the tenantry. To create votes, when votes were a saleable property, and to increase produce when prices were high, they had multiplied small tenancies; and when prices fell and votes became precarious, they had cleared out tenants with the same indifference that a man thins his warrens or diminishes his grazing stock. Tenancy-at-will had produced a condition of national existence the like of which was to be found nowhere under the sky of heaven. The farm labourers, depending on casual employment for

[1] The Commissioners were the Earl of Devon, the chairman from whom it took its name, Sir Robert Ferguson, M.P., Mr George Alexander Hamilton, M.P., Mr (afterwards Sir Thomas) Redington, and Mr Wynne; with Captain Pitt Kennedy as secretary.

daily bread, were badly housed, badly clothed, and badly paid. In many districts their only food was the potato, their only drink the running stream; their cabin was seldom a shelter against weather; a bed or blanket was a rare luxury among them; and, commonly, a pig and manure heap constituted their sole property. They were generally holders of small farms till the practice of systematic ejectment had commenced. When they were ejected, they flocked to the towns and carried disease and death in their train.

"It would be impossible," say the Commissioners, "for language to convey an idea of the state of distress to which the ejected tenantry have been reduced, or of the disease, misery, and even vice which they have propagated in the towns wherein they have settled; so that not only they who have been ejected have been rendered miserable, but they have carried with them and propagated that misery. They have increased the stock of labour; they have rendered the habitations of those who received them more crowded; they have given occasion to the dissemination of disease; they have been obliged to resort to theft and all manner of vice and iniquity to procure subsistence, but, what is the most painful of all, a vast number of them perished from want." [1]

This population has been habitually described as violent and revengeful in newspapers supported by their oppressors, in order to misrepresent them, but the Commission bore different testimony. The labouring population, they admitted, had generally exhibited a patient endurance under sufferings greater than the people of any other country in Europe had to sustain.

With the report was published the evidence of the principal witnesses. Many Englishmen, well disposed towards Ireland, were long perplexed by the fact that agrarian outrages commonly occurred in the south or west, and were seldom heard of in Ulster; and they saw no escape from the explanation tendered by the No-Popery Press, that this contrast was referable to the Scotch descent or the Protestant creed of the population. The agents of great proprietors in Ulster set this difficulty effectually at rest. There were few agrarian outrages in Ulster because there were few agrarian grievances; wherever the grievances appeared the outrages speedily followed. From the time of the Plantation a custom existed to allow the tenant, when he desired to quit his holding, to sell the goodwill or right of possession, and it was sometimes worth twenty years' purchase. This practice of selling the goodwill, which was at first a concession to the tenantry, was found to be equally beneficial to the landlords. It caused estates to be improved with-

[1] Devon Report, page 21.

out any expenditure of capital by the owner, and it secured the payment of arrears of rent; for an occupier could only sell his tenant-right on condition of discharging his liability to the landlord. Some attempts had recently been made on certain estates to disallow tenant-right, and the attempt had been immediately followed by offences of the same character complained of in the south; the incoming tenant's house was burned, his cattle houghed (the tendons of the hind leg cut), or his crops trodden down by night. "The disallowance of tenant-right," said Lord Lurgan's agent, "is always attended by outrage." The witnesses were asked what would be the effect of treating the Ulster tenantry as the Munster tenantry were habitually treated. "You would," said the agent of the Marquis of Londonderry, "have a Tipperary in Down if it were attempted." "I do not believe," said the agent of another great proprietor, "there is force at the disposal of the Horse Guards sufficient to keep the peace of the province in such a contingency." [1] The peace of the province was kept by a simpler method; but it had not hitherto dawned on the mind of English statesmen that, if injustice would create a Tipperary in Down, justice, it might be surmised, would create a Down in Tipperary.

If this penetrating light had been thrown upon the condition of Russian serfs or Indian ryots, opinion in England would have speedily adjusted itself to the new facts. But there is still, I fear, an Englishman here and there who does not quite understand the simple problem why there is peace in Down and war in Tipperary.

The first of the Irish projects submitted to Parliament was the bill to endow Maynooth. It was a measure of generous statesmanship, and its character was promptly recognised in Ireland. "Peel has been just, it was said, why should not we?" [2] Thirty thousand pounds were granted to enlarge the college, and the annual endowment to pay professors and maintain free students was raised from £9,000 to £26,000. And, what was rare in Parliamentary boons to Ireland, the measure was not fettered by any provisions offensive to the feelings of Catholics. This expenditure was not an extravagant one to educate the clergy of eight millions of the people in a country where one of the richest universities in Europe provided for the education of the clergy of the minority; but it was too liberal for England, and a frenzy of

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[1] Evidence of Mr Hancock, agent to Lord Lurgan.
[2] See note in Appendix on Peel's Concessions and Young Ireland.

resistance rose against it. Peel once more, as in 1829, was reproached as a new Iscariot. Cities and towns and villages competed for priority in denouncing the measure. Three thousand petitions were presented against it, embracing all classes, from the citizens of London, headed by their chief magistrate, down to the Methodists' congregation in the remotest hamlet, who were enjoying the religious equality which Catholics had helped them to obtain. The petitioners were computed at a million and a quarter. The Protestant minority in Ireland, laden with spoil reft from the Irish nation, were among the loudest objectors.

Mr Shaw, who represented the exclusive University of Dublin, threatened Peel with a Protestant movement for Repeal if he persisted in improving the condition of the Catholic college. Ireland, he insisted, had of late been treated rather as a colonial dependency than as an integral portion of the Empire.

In the same key the *Evening Mail* assured Irish Protestants that they were about to be utterly betrayed; and forewarned them that when the Church was destroyed and Repeal accomplished they would have bitter cause to remember that they allowed the guardianship of their religion and their liberties to pass from their own hands.

There were two sentiments struggling for mastery in the breasts of the young men at this time; horror of the existing land question, and the hope of a compact with the gentry which would at once secure justice to the tenantry and restore the country to its rights. The junction of Smith O'Brien, Lord Cloncurry, Grey Porter, and other landed proprietors naturally encouraged this hope.

John Dillon, who was impatient of the slow progress of opinion among the gentry while the tenantry endured poverty and ruin, had urged a little earlier a combination to compel concessions. It was a forecast of much which has since befallen.

"What is the course," he wrote, "which the people of Ireland ought to pursue? They ought to join together, and call with one voice for a complete remodelling of the laws affecting landed property. Instead of committing unmeaning murders, which every good man must condemn, however he may pity the unhappy wretches who are driven to these dreadful deeds—instead of breaking out into partial insurrections, which only expose them to the vengeance of their oppressors, let them unite and work with a common purpose, and their combined strength cannot be resisted. What have the aristocracy to oppose to the united strength of the people? Their power is based upon force, and that force is derived from the people; let the people withhold that force to-morrow, and the power of their tyrants is at an end. Let them demand a valuation of the land, and perpetuity for the tenant,—let them be faithful, united, and bold, and this demand, founded as it is in justice, will not, must not, be refused."

And on another occasion he painted with vivid power a specimen of the worst landlords in his native province:—

"A Connaught landlord sees but one object in creation, and that is himself. He alone is made for enjoyment—all things else are made for him. He counts the potatoes on which the poor man lives. His horses are better lodged and his hounds better fed than the most comfortable tenant on his estate. Even his own interest is sacrificed to the gratification of his short-sighted avarice. If any man should be so desperate as to expend his money or his labour in improving his land, he raises the rent or turns him out. He is without even the more vulgar sort of benevolence; he squanders the patrimony of his own children in ostentation and luxury, and leaves them beggars. As for patriotism, he either fears or laughs at it. A Connaught landlord has no country."

But Davis and the majority of his comrades thought a truce with the gentry would produce such important results that we must patiently work out the experiment of gaining them, even when their motives were narrow and ungenerous. And Dillon acted on this opinion.

MacNevin, to whom a conviction often came as it comes to a woman of genius rather by intuition than by any process of reasoning, thought the experiment would fail. But like Camille Desmoulin, he threw out his thoughts disguised as pleasantries, and could not always get men to accept them seriously. "The Protestant gentry were excellent patriots, he said, "when they had everything their own way in the country; and perhaps they will be excellent patriots again when they have nothing their own way; but if you expect them in a fit of enthusiasm to make such a surrender of privileges and monopolies as their class made in France, you must first bring them, like the French *seigneurs*, face to face with Revolution."

It was pleasant to note among the hubbub of alarmed monopolists some creditable instances of fairness and sympathy. The Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, remembering the recent assistance they had received from the Catholics, petitioned in favour of the measure. They enjoyed liberal aid, they said, for the education and support of their ecclesiastical students out of the public taxes, and they wished the same advantages to be extended to the Catholics. And the Methodists of Barnstaple in Devonshire prayed Parliament that no more public money might be advanced to the Church of England or her universities or schools unless the College of Maynooth were allowed to participate. The resistance to the endowment, though bitter and frequently male volent, was not altogether bigoted. It is impossible to doubt that it sprung in some considerable degree from preference to the voluntary

system, when Mr Bright and Mr Sharman Crawford felt themselves constrained to support it.

On the second reading of the Bill the Prime Minister explained and justified his new policy. There was then pending a dispute with the United States respecting England's claim to the Oregon territory, a claim which, as first minister of England, he had shortly before intimated his intention of supporting by force. It was his design to make peace at home before entering upon a foreign contest; and for this purpose he was ready to face serious difficulties, and to make painful sacrifices. He would state his object plainly. In 1843 there was formidable and dangerous excitement in Ireland; the Government had resorted to the courts of law, which pronounced the condemnation of the persons engaged in these demonstrations; a calm ensued, and then he thought it was the duty of the Government to take into consideration the condition of that country.

"You must break up," he said, "the formidable conspiracy which exists against the British Government and the British connection. I do not believe you can break it by force; but you may break it up by acting in a spirit of kindness, forbearance, and generosity."

The Whigs had been the first to exhort Peel to try concessions, but when their advice was adopted they were not overjoyed at their success. Mr Macaulay, in those days one of the chief spokesmen of the Opposition, fell foul of the Government for their sudden change of front. He supported their proposal, but he complained that it should have been made by such unfitting agents. The minister, he said, had taught one immortal lesson to Ireland—a lesson rulers should be slow to teach, for it is a lesson nations were not slow to learn. He had long told Ireland by his acts, and now told her in express words, that the way to obtain concessions from him was by agitation. "They were granted, because Mr O'Connell and Mr Polk had made the Government uneasy; and it seemed that the best and most effectual place for an Irish representative to serve his country was in Conciliation Hall."

It was perhaps an effective stroke of Parliamentary fence to smite the minister for his inconsistency; but as Ireland was looking on, it was the stroke of a party gladiator, not of an Imperial statesman. In what followed the Whig rhetorician more plainly subordinated the interest of his country to the interests of his party. Peel was bidding against O'Connell for the control of Ireland; he was not making concessions to Repeal, but concessions which he hoped might mitigate the desire for

Repeal. Mr Macaulay was coerced to vote with him, but he did his best to disparage his policy. He demanded why, after having goaded Ireland to madness for the purpose of ingratiating himself with England, the minister was setting England on fire for the purpose of ingratiating himself with the Irish. He invited the Conservative party to consider where a policy would lead them which gave nothing to justice and everything to fear. But whoever might coquette with Irish sedition, he and his friends would never do so. They would not concede Repeal:—

"Never, though the country should be surrounded by dangers as great as those which threatened her when her American colonies and France and Spain and Holland were leagued against her, and when the armed neutrality of the Baltic disputed her maritime rights; never, though another Bonaparte should pitch his camp in sight of Dover Castle; never, till all things had been staked and lost; never, till the four quarters of the world have been convulsed by the last struggle of the great English people for their place amongst nations."

Challenged in this manner, Sir James Graham, on behalf of the Government, hastened to echo the war whoop. He, too, would uphold the Union, though the foundations of the Empire should be shaken in the struggle.

When these declarations reached Ireland they were met in language of dignified rebuke which Irishmen may still read with cordial assent. Smith O'Brien spoke in terms well becoming an Irish gentleman, and expressing his exact opinions and intentions. If the question was to be treated as one in which the interests of England alone were consulted, and the interests of Ireland ignored, he was persuaded the Union could not be sustained on this basis. Though he was not fond of holding out promises, he did not hesitate to declare that if the North joined with the South the Union would be repealed without striking a blow.

"I tell Mr Macaulay," he said in conclusion, "that if the contingency which he contemplates were to happen, it would then be too late to negotiate with the people of Ireland. I tell him that if fifty thousand French stood on the strand of Normandy ready to pass over by steam to the undefended shores of Britain, if an American fleet swept the Irish Channel and carried on board regiments of Irish emigrants enrolled, armed, and disciplined, ready to land on Irish soil to defend the rights of their native land; if the Irish soldiers in the British army, forming one-third of that entire force, should refuse, as I believe they unquestionably would refuse, to shed the blood of their fellow-countrymen; if one million of the natives of Ireland resident in England and Scotland were prepared, as I am of opinion they would be prepared, to co-

operate with the firm resolve of the people of this country; if such a state of things should come to pass, why, then, the consummation which Mr Macaulay appears to contemplate would take place—the British Empire would be broken up, and thenceforward the history of Ireland would be written as that of a separate and independent country."

Mr Grey Porter, like Mr Macaulay, appealed to history. Sixty years before, English politicians employed similar language. When they were asked to redress the grievances of America, they declared that heaven and earth would come together before they would concede what was asked; and yet three years later the treaty was signed that recognised the independence of the United States. And MacNevin bade Repealers remember that the party who, by the mouth of Mr Macaulay, offered the Irish people the Jacobin alternative of fraternity or death, were the same party who, under the Rockingham administration, had solemnly pledged themselves to the legislative independence of Ireland as a final adjustment of the controversy between the countries, and carried through the English Parliament an act renouncing for ever all legislative control over Ireland.

O'Brien's speech was undoubtedly seditious, more seditious than the language for which O'Connell had been prosecuted in 1833 or 1844. But it was received with nearly universal applause by the gentlemen of Ireland. Their pride was wounded by the Whig rhetorician's appeal to brute force, which in essence did not differ from the language of Nicholas to the Poles or of Metternich to the Italians. Had the speech been prosecuted O'Brien would have reiterated and justified it. And he would have had the sympathy of his order; for if Ireland was living under the British Constitution it was felt to be as improper to answer her demand for local government in these brutal terms, as to make such an answer to the contemporary demands of the Anti-Corn Law League. But if she was not living under the British Constitution, if this foolhardy warning that she must not expect relief except when her neighbour was in the last extremity expressed the settled purpose of the Empire, Irish gentlemen foresaw with consternation the consequences which would flow from such a fact. With what certainty men would desire that that last extremity, in which only they would expect fair play, would speedily arise? It is the duty of a statesman to teach nations that the claim of justice cannot honourably, and in the long run cannot safely, be resisted. To republican America and philosophic Germany, to France which had formulated the doctrines of public liberty, and Belgium which had fought for them, the proposal to reconsider the relations of

two united countries and rearrange them more conveniently, was a very moderate and rational project. But the mass of the English people have never been able to recognise any equity which countervails their interests or alarms their pride. And this blind doltish obstinacy Mr Macaulay clothed in the vesture of rhetoric and eloquence. Like Peel, he taught a lesson which rulers ought to be slow to teach, for nations are not slow to learn, the bitter lesson that the Irish people had a vital interest in the calamity and discomfiture of England.[1]

The second reading of the bill was carried by a large majority, and it passed through its subsequent stages and became law.[2]

The Repeal members still attended Conciliation Hall in lieu of Palace Yard, and this preference was regarded with grave displeasure and alarm by the Whigs and by many of the Radicals. Mr Hume, after having privately remonstrated with O'Connell and O'Brien in vain,[3] gave notice of a call of the House to compel the attendance of the Irish members. The General Committee took this menace into consideration, and after careful deliberation, resolved that the call ought to be disobeyed. Smith O'Brien, who was absent in the country, sent a prompt adhesion to this policy. "I will not," he wrote, "attend the call of the House with which Mr Hume menaces us." Mr John O'Connell echoed this language, and O'Connell went the length of contending that the House of Commons under the Act of Union had no power to enforce its orders in Ireland. For a moment a dangerous contest between an authority which claimed to be supreme in the Empire, and the Association which swayed opinion in Ireland, seemed imminent. But the Government did not choose to have their concessions embarrassed by this Opposition escapade, and on the day fixed for Mr

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[1] Mr Macaulay seems always to have proceeded upon the assumption that God's justice is a luxury, like Bass's beer and Holloway's ointment, intended specially for British enjoyment. In his article on Milton in the *Edinburgh Review*, he says: "One part of the Empire was so unhappily circumstanced that, at that time, its misery was necessary to our happiness, and its slavery to our freedom." This maxim describes his own policy in the reign of Queen Victoria as accurately as Cromwell's in the Commonwealth. It is as base a rule of conduct at bottom as any that can be picked out of Machiavelli. It may be noted that whereas O'Connell has been assailed for teaching that "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity," Mr Macaulay taught in this debate that England's greatest difficulty is Ireland's only opportunity. Peel gallantly facing the prejudice of his partisans on that occasion to accomplish a public good, and Macaulay stimulating their blind rage for the benefit of party, is not a picture men of letters will recall with pleasure.

[2] The majority was 328 votes to 176.

[3] Cahermoyle Correspondence.

Hume's motion there was no House, and it fell ignominiously to the ground.[1]

[1] Mr Hume was much censured in Ireland for becoming the cat's-paw of the Whigs upon this occasion. In 1837, when he was rejected by Middlesex and could not obtain a seat in his native country, he was elected for the city of Kilkenny without a penny of expense, beyond the postage of a letter announcing the fact, which in those days amounted to tenpence. It was always supposed in England that this seat had been procured for him by O'Connell, but in fact it was the spontaneous compliment of the reformers of Kilkenny, led by Dr Cane, to a prominent English reformer. His new constituents sent a deputation to London at their own cost to announce his election, and one of them afterwards assured me that Mr Hume, after listening to an address of congratulation with which they were charged, excused himself for a brief reply by informing them that his luncheon was waiting, and bowed out his new friends without ceremony. This was the last deputation Kilkenny sent to a financial reformer.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WORKSHOP OF YOUNG IRELAND.

As Peel's second proposal led to serious controversy, which in the end compelled the young men to confront the greatest tribune of modern times in the arena where he had long been supreme, it will be convenient, before describing it, to take note of the work in which they were engaged at that time. Notwithstanding the stealthy attempts to injure them, they pursued their policy with unflagging industry. The Eighty-Two Club, projected during the imprisonment, was now founded. The design was tó bring the intelligence, rank, and wealth of the National party into one centre, and to open a door to adherents who on various grounds held aloof from the Association.[1] Lord Cloncurry was the first recruit of this class who justified their hopes. The express object was to encourage Irish art and literature, and to diffuse a national feeling through society, and its chief means to accustom Catholics and Protestants to act together. An expensive uniform and a strict ballot rendered it somewhat too exclusive in its character, but in the end it answered its purpose by becoming practically a muster of the National leaders of the present and the future. O'Connell was president,and of the five vice-presidents three were Protestants; of the two secretaries, one was a Protestant; and at its public meetings the resolutions were generally proposed and seconded by a Protestant and a Catholic. Its first public banquet was held at the Rotunda on the 16th of April, the sixty-third anniversary of the day upon which Grattan moved the Declaration of Independence. Upwards of a hundred gentlemen, many of them men of name and mark, arrayed in native green, destined, as they believed, some day to become the official uniform of a national Government, and

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[1] O'Connell did not conceal from himself the necessity of offering this alternative. In the Association (Jan. 25th), speaking of the Club, he said: "The prejudice which existed against the Repeal Association would not exist against it."

a national army, sat round the board. They included the most conspicuous Nationalists in Parliament, at the Bar, among the gentry, and in the municipalities, and some who were destined to become conspicuous in the approaching future. Among the latter were Thomas Francis Meagher, John Mitchel, T. B. M'Manus, John Martin, and P. J. Smyth, who had not yet written, spoken, or acted under the public eye; who, except in one or two instances, did not know each other, or the comrades with whom they were to be associated in life and death; but who were drawn by an irresistible gravitation to the new centre of action. Only one member was excused from appearing in uniform, the venerable Cornelius M'Loughlen, who had borne arms among the volunteers when the historic events occurred which the Club was founded to commemorate. Over the president's chair hung Kenny's picture of the Irish Parliament on the night when Grattan rose to proclaim it a free and sovereign legislature, crowded with the portraits of the men of Eighty-two. Flags symbolising the past and the future of Ireland were distributed throughout the hall, and the presence of nearly three hundred ladies gave to the striking scene its final grace and triumph. Among the toasts was "The Memory of Grattan and Flood," angry rivals in life, but reunited in the love of the people whom they served; and it was pleasant to hear the son and namesake of Henry Grattan declare that his father had drunk the divine draught of liberty from the fountain of living water of which Flood was the guardian. Molyneux, Swift, and Lucas, the forerunners of Flood and Grattan, were fitly commemorated. MacNevin, who proposed their memory, read from their career the lesson that persecution or defeat does not render the life of the patriot useless; at worst he sows the seed of happier days. As the midnight hour approached, and the company began to separate, Davis was called upon to propose a toast connected with the Arts in Ireland. He had rarely made a set speech in public. The late hour, the exhaustion of the company after an exciting day, and the triteness of the topic, made his friends who had pressed him into the position anxious and nervous. But a voice vibrating with sincerity and conviction arrested the company already beginning to separate; they gathered round him with the silent rapt attention which is the orator's greatest triumph, and remained to the close impatient at missing a word. Next day one of his friends who had watched the scene with critical care assured him that he might count on success as an orator as authentic as that which he had won as a poet and a thinker.

But the new organisation involved one grave danger, which no

prudence could altogether evade. If it opened its doors to the disreputable tail of the old Association it would plainly miss its aim, for it was they who frightened away the class whom it was founded to enlist; and if it refused to admit them, the refusal was sure to create bitter and deadly enmities. Lane, who was then in Cork, wrote to Davis insisting on this latter danger:—

"I'm sorry that I can't have a talk with you on the subject, as I must confess I do not at all understand the Eighty-Two Club. I fancied at first that I had some glimmering of its meaning, but I thought that the means adopted were altogether inadequate and inappropriate to secure the end in view. I fancied it was to make Repeal genteel—which I do not consider of any value, even if it were possible; to turn Hercules into an Antinous, and teach him to wield his club gracefully, is, I think, an idle task. Let Repealers be strong and earnest and they may be as ungraceful as they will—it is better have them clench their teeth and knit their brows than smile with elegance. It would be impossible to form a large body of Repealers who have what may be called 'position in society.' If you can form a star of them so much the better, but where do you draw the line of distinction between the nucleus of aristocracy and the nebulous mass of shabby gentility which surrounds it? Begin with Lord French, Sir Richard Musgrave, Smith O'Brien, and the members of Parliament—exclude (M. N.)—he is indignant; admit him—well, exclude (O. P.) and he is outrageous; or admit him and you must admit (X. Y. Z.)[1] and so on until you include every man who can borrow a guinea and get tick from his tailor—or else you cause dissension. You must either miss your proposed object, or do worse, divide your party. No! You should have got up a good club, like the Kildare Street, where a man could not complain if he were rejected; or you should have had a society of some sort like what you once proposed to Lefanu for the Young Ireland of both parties, into which men of all opinions would be admitted; or you should deluge Royal Irish Academies, and Royal Dublin Societies, and every old institution with Repealers. You may make the great body of the Protestants at present swallow nationality, but you cannot make them gulp down Repeal, or, as they believe it to be, O'Connellism. If they become national 'tis all we want; the rest will follow as sure as the fruit follows the flower; you must have a spring and a summer before you have an autumn.

"In Cork the people in general have a great hatred of uniforms; the Town Councillors and Aldermen here could not be got to wear robes. This I think principally arises from the morbidly keen sense of the ludicrous which Cork men generally possess. Tom Steele could not live a week in Cork."

Searching criticism like this from observant friends generally came to temper whatever project the party undertook. The attempt to nationalise art had been only moderately successful. From the beginning some of us held that all we could accomplish was to replace the rude and sometimes indecent daubs which were to be found in the humblest lodging and in the poorest cabin by lithographs and wood

[1] In the original letter, names, not symbols, are employed.

engravings carefully drawn, and presenting scenes of historic or traditional interest.[1] Davis had hoped for much more, but one of his personal friends, the most gifted of the resident artists in Ireland, who loved the man more than he shared his opinions, dissipated this hope.[2]

"How to answer your question regarding the nationalising of art," he wrote, "I hardly know, but I fear certain hundreds of pounds will never produce either art or nationality. Indeed the measure of success the Parliamentary Committee have attained in their praiseworthy endeavours in England is a sufficient commentary upon such a mode of attempting the end sought. You should give Ireland first a decided national school of poetry—that is song—and the other phases will soon show themselves. This I must allow is being done—but the effect is not complete. You know that this mode is the only possible one as well as I do, but you have lurking hopes that things can be forced. Ah, my dear friend, free, spiritual, high-aiming art cannot be forced. Some great passion—some earnest and all unworldly feeling—some profound state of thought—something that, whilst making this material universe the scene, and its material offspring the actors, shall yet reach at what is far above and beyond it all—something of this kind alone will extricate the lightning flash 'from the black cloud that bound it.' And would you seek any less than the highest? But I blunder, for I cannot admit anything less to be art at all. . . . The Germans have a school of art—but they have one of poetry—eminently German too, therefore eminently original. The English have no truly English school of poetry (although they have had great—the greatest poets), consequently no truly English art, at least beyond a certain reach in landscapes. Why is all this? The Germans have, to go back further, a school of philosophy, even as the Greeks had, and the mediæval Italians—mingled in all three with their deepest religious faith. It is from this that issued all the rays that, combining, made one brilliant and consistent flow of vivifying light. When England can unveil such a sun—when Ireland can rub her eyes clear of short-sighted, mean, and petty, and too often selfish, ends, then shall the irresistible influence, the welcomed law of art, proceed also from them as from new centres."

But it is through the discipline of failure that success is oftenest won,

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[1] "I wish much that you could get something done by the Repeal Association towards providing good prints, very cheap, for the poor. I observe in almost every cottage where absolute destitution does not exist a disposition to hang up prints on the walls. Generally they are wretched productions, having neither grace nor truth. Could we not induce some competent artist to give us lithograph sketches, which could be circulated through hawkers and pedlars at a low price? Religious subjects appear to be the most popular—military come next. Temperance prints also are not uncommon. It would be well to invite proposals, with a view to see what sort of artists we should be able to get. I wish that the Reformed Corporations would take upon themselves to found picture galleries in the Town Halls of the several towns. If each Corporation in the kingdom would order from some Irish artist one picture each year, what great and immediate encouragement would be given to Irish art! So also with sculpture. The present appears to me to be a very favourable moment for such a suggestion."—Davis Papers. O'Brien to Davis, Aug. 3, '45.

[2] Mr, afterwards Sir, Frederick Burton.

and the young men undertook other work which had a speedy and complete success; work by which they are most affectionately remembered at present, and will probably be longest remembered in the future. They determined to make a careful attempt to fill up certain obvious gaps in the national literature. The most urgent want was an adequate history of Ireland. Among a library of books labelled "histories" there was not one which could be put with credit into the hands of a stranger or a student. Jeffrey Keating's big volume, which is a congeries of dull fables relieved by some glimmering of traditional truth, only comes down to the period of the English Invasion. Dr Leland is prejudiced and meagre, relieved by such stinted fairness as a professor of Trinity College and viceregal chaplain in the reign of George III. might venture to exhibit, and he only comes down to the Treaty of Limerick. Plowden is Leland rewritten, compressed, liberalised, and supplemented by original documents. Moore stops at the Commonwealth, and his first volume is overloaded with worthless antiquarian essays. MacGeoghegan's history, a faithful and honest book, was written in France, and in French; was clumsily translated, and closes at the termination of the Williamite wars. O'Connell's "Memoir of Ireland" did not pretend to be a history, but only a skilful brief of the case against England; and Moore's "Captain Rock" (a pleasant *jeu d'esprit*) is not a narrative, but a commentary, and a commentary not free from the *soupçon* of contempt for Ireland, which, after the fashion of Sydney Smith and the *Edinburgh Review*, was considered essential to get justice and common-sense on the subject a hearing in England. A generation earlier Shelley, then a boyish enthusiast, went on a mission to Dublin to preach the policy of Ireland breaking away from the Union, and this want struck him so painfully that he contributed a liberal sum to procure the publication of a national history; but unfortunately the result was a rhetorical pamphlet of no weight or authority.[1] And now (in 1844) another generous Englishman, Dr Smiles, wrote a serviceable handbook of Irish transactions, marred only by a stranger's necessary ignorance of the relative importance and historical perspective of events. The void still remained to be filled, and the Repeal Association offered a prize for a competent book for schools and students. Davis, who had only moderate trust in the effect of prizes, was disposed to relinquish his work in the *Nation* for twelve months, and write a history himself.

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[1] D. F. McCarthy's "Early Days of Shelley." The book he promoted is known as Lawless's "History of Ireland," John Lawless being a fluent and effective popular orator in those days.

MacNevin was fired with the same ambition, and began to study the materials; but it was a task for which he had no natural aptitude, and he had to learn laboriously facts which were as familiar to Davis as the days of the week. Davis sought to enlist a friend, to whom he had recourse in every literary emergency; he besought Maddyn to do the work:—

"I undertook to write a History of Ireland from the Treaty of Limerick to 1829, or such other period (earlier or later) in this century as I thought fit. The work was to be issued in parts, and then in a volume of six or seven hundred octavo pages. For this I was offered £300, and £100 more if it succeeded. Now, I have not written a page of this. I could not write it well without leaving to other men political duties which are every day becoming more weighty and solemn. You would write the history of such a time, abounding in civil events, parties, and characters, infinitely better than I could, even had I the utmost leisure. It is most desirable for Ireland that you should live in and write for it. Will you then seriously deliberate on this? If the authorship of 'Ireland and its Rulers' do not interfere with the success of the Grattan [he had edited Grattan's speeches], I assume James Duffy will give you at least £300 for a book which will be better than I *could* have given him, and which your literary repute will serve more than my political connections could. Consider, then, whether this sum would pay you, and whether your mind would not be better and happier at home here than in the brick desert of London. As, however, the British Museum has many materials, you might write most, or all, in London, if you preferred it."

In the end the design was put on a more practical footing; it was agreed to write the history in eras, and entrust it to as many competent writers as could be procured. The success of the shilling volumes issued by Lord Brougham suggested the application of the same method and machinery to the diffusion of Irish books, and I proposed to my friends a series of shilling volumes of biography, poetry, and criticism, to be called the "Library of Ireland," in which the historical design might be carried out. They took up the project eagerly. MacNevin wrote the first volume, the "Irish Volunteers," and Davis, in the midst of a hundred engagements, set to work upon a memoir of "Wolfe Tone," whom he esteemed one of the greatest Irishmen of the eighteenth century; Father Meehan wrote the tragic story of the "Confederation of Kilkenny"; other friends followed, and a volume issued every month for nearly two years, till a fatal conflict with O'Connell diverted their energy into fresh channels. The little books had an immediate success, and after the lapse of half a century, when the writers are dead, new editions constantly issue from the press in Ireland and America. In the year 1890 the forty-second edition of some of the volumes is current, and more than a quarter of a million of copies of

C. P. Meehan

MEMORANDUM.

With the portrait now reproduced Father Meehan sent me some dates in his life which ought to be preserved till his memoir is written:—"Born in Great Britain Street, Dublin, July 12th, 1812. Schooled in Ballymahon, Co. Longford, where I learned the first rudiments in a hedge-school kept by one Peter MacCabe of drunken memory. 1828 saw me in Rome, whence I returned in 1836 and had my first mission in Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow. Early in 1842 for the first time saw C. G. D., with whom I dined in Leinster Square, Rathmines, where I saw a gathering such as I may never hope to see again. *Voilà tout* about a very insignificant individual. The photo does resemble, but *un portrait ne doit être regardé que de loin.*"

C.G.D.

the more popular books have been circulated wherever the English tongue is spoken. The Memoirs of Francis Jeffrey and of Miss Mitford and the miscellanies of Leigh Hunt enable us to estimate the impression they created among the critical class in England, never too friendly to Irish experiments. Scholars and critics have followed who may smile at the hasty generalities and ill-digested facts which sometimes passed for history in these little books; but it must always be confessed that the writers opened a mine shut up for two centuries and a half, and taught their successors where the precious ore might be found.[1] And one at least of the workmen has never relinquished his task.[2] When his friends were dead or exiled, and the country torpid, he still bestowed upon Ireland books which in happier days will class him with MacGeoghegan, Lanigan, and O'Connor, the patriot priests who continued in adverse times the pious work begun in the Monastery of Donegal.

I find among the letters addressed to MacNevin at this time one which will exhibit the sort of discipline to which the young men subjected each other, that they might become skilful soldiers, and be able to stand fire before the enemy.

"Three editions of the 'Volunteers' in a few weeks, and a fourth on the stocks, is a great triumph. I have read the last as carefully as you wished, and I set down suggestions for the next edition as they occured to me :—

"1. Take your name from the preface. It is in the two preceding pages (viz. the title page and the dedication), and, in the new edition, to the new preface. The four Thomas MacNevins in four consecutive pages constitute an aggregate meeting which in my opinion ought to be dispersed.

"2. Page 28. For 'Tyrone' write 'Hugh O'Neill'; and put in a note 'The great Earl of Tyrone, properly Aodh O'Neill.' It is so he is spoken of in Irish annals, and thus people will be able to identify him with Mitchel's hero when Mitchel's book appears.

"3. Page 29. 'O'Neill was attainted.' Which O'Neill? There were several rather eminent men of the name at that time. Shane, I presume, is intended; but you must specify."

"4. Same page. 'His *inherited* territories of Down and Antrim.' No Irish chief of that period inherited his territories; he was elected to them; and one of our complaints against the English is that they dealt with the property of the clan by forfeiture as if it were inherited by the chief; which it was not any more than the Lord Mayor inherits the Mansion House.

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[1] The "Library of Ireland" has often, and very naturally, been attributed to Davis, who originated so much. But this design and the conduct of it to the end belonged wholly to one far less capable of turning it to account.

[2] The late Rev. Charles P. Meehan.

Moreover, Down and Antrim certainly were not *his* territories inherited or acquired. You must have fallen into some error here.

"5. Page 43. 'There was no virtue too pure, no patriotism too generous. Are these fitting terms to apply to the opposition in question? Is it wholly improbable that he would have lauded the Wood scheme to the skies if it had been proposed by St John or Harley?

"6. Page 74. 'Now for the *first* time a people sprung to life.' Was it the first time, my friend? and were the volunteers the Irish people? Shade of Roger O'Moore and Patrick Sarsfield forgive you!

"7. At page 115 you determine the number of the volunteers to be fifty thousand, yet you afterwards repeatedly speak of them as a hundred thousand – for example at p. 146, and p. 153, and p. 191.

"8. Page 128. 'Rebellion and conspiracy.' Pray transpose the words. Don't men conspire first and rebel afterwards?

"9. Page 192. Where you mention Lord Kenmare you ought to state that he was a Catholic peer, without which intimation English readers will be slow to understand what follows.

"These suggestions are worth little or nothing, but they give me a claim upon you to read my volume next month as assiduously, with a similar purpose. Davis will be busy for three weeks on 'Wolfe Tone,' during which time pray send me a literary paper in addition to your political article as often as you can."[1]

Sir Colman O'Loghlen promised me his aid, and projected two books, neither of which unfortunately was afterwards written. But his design may stimulate some lawyer of a later generation to undertake the relinquished task.

"We propose to begin with the first volume of the Bench and the Bar of Ireland. The series will probably run to two or three volumes. We of course exclude all living men, and have divided the subject between us. I take the earlier and O'Donohue the later portion. The series includes sketches of Sir John Davies, Sir Richard Bolton, Patrick Darcy, C. J. Keatinge, Sir Toby Butler, C. J. Whitshed, Anthony Malone, Lord Avonmore, Hussey Burgh, Lord Clonmel, Curran, etc.

"With respect to the work in which I have no fellow-labourer — the 'Legal History of Ireland'—I cannot promise a volume till September 1846. I propose to go back to the remotest times—to that of the Brehon law, and the customs and tenures of ancient Ireland—the introduction and gradual progress of the Anglo-Norman law—the legislation of the Parliaments of the Pale—the rise and history of the present Courts of Justice—the history of the Castle Chamber—of the Courts of Presidency of Munster and Connaught, etc., and to bring down the history of Irish legislation, social, political, and commercial (as far as can be done in an historical and not a technical work), to the Revolution of 1800. This will consequently give me a great deal to do."[2]

Though a knowledge of Ireland was first insisted upon, the teaching of the young men was not narrow or insular. Among work begun at

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[1] Duffy to MacNevin.
[2] O'Loghlen to Duffy.

this time were a series of critical papers on the English poets, and on continental literature, accounts of colonial and foreign legislatures, historical essays on obscure or misunderstood eras, popular summaries of political science, essays on national sports, and retrospective reviews of the best Irish books in history, fiction, and the drama.

The number of books published in Dublin coloured with the new national sentiment continued to excite the wonder of English critics. Many of them were poor and temporary, but some were of permanent interest. Carleton wrote, as a *feuilleton* for the *Nation*, a story of landlord tyranny which outgrew the limits of a newspaper and became the most successful of his novels. Dr Madden in his "Connection between the Kingdom of Ireland and the Crown of England" furnished original and important materials for Irish history; and even Lever made the experiment of a story founded on the wrongs and sufferings of the peasantry; the first and last of its class in all his writings.[1]

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[1] Carleton's story was "Valentine M'Clutchy," Lever's "St Patrick's Eve." In London, Mr Marmion Savage, Clerk of the Privy Council, and a writer in the *Examiner*, published a novel entitled "The Falcon Family; or, Young Ireland," John Pigot, under the title of "Tigernach MacMorris," being the hero of the story, which was a long and rather feeble pasquinade. The books projected by the Young Irelanders were nearly all published by Mr James Duffy. He was originally a bookseller on a small scale in an obscure street, dealing chiefly in reprints of religious publications, but his enterprise and liberality carried him into a wider field, and ultimately created a trade extending to India, America, and Australia. The "Spirit of the Nation" was issued in the first instance from the *Nation* office, but as the demand for it became embarrassing I looked out for a publisher, and fixed upon Mr James Duffy. This was the beginning of his connection with the Young Ireland party. He was a man of shrewd sense and sly humour, but without cultivation or judgment in literature, and it was a subject of constant vexation to the men who were making his name familiar to the world that, side by side with books of eminent merit, he would issue some dreadful abortion of an Irish story or an Irish pamphlet which was certain to be treated at a distance as the latest production of Young Ireland! It is impossible to read even now without mingled amusement and sympathy the explosions of wrath over these shortcomings, which found vent in their private correspondence at that time. On one occasion the writer of a book of careful thought and great research had promised an early copy to an eminent English critic, to be sent through one of Duffy's London agents. It did not arrive in due course, and the critic caused an application to be made to the agent in question. The agent was a woman, keeping a newspaper shop near a Catholic chapel—for the regular trade did not circulate Duffy's books till he established, in later years, a branch in Paternoster Row—and she sent the critic back his own note refolded and unstamped, with a notification on the blank sheet that she knew nothing of Mr So-and-So or his book. The critic sent his note and its endorsement to the author, with what result I may leave to the imagination of readers familiar with the *irritabile genus*. It was a standing joke somewhat later that the publisher had made a just and successful criticism at the expense of D'Arcy M'Gee. M'Gee described the hero of some national legend as having hair black and glossy as the wing of a young raven. "Why," says Mr Duffy, with a sly smile, "when I was a boy the wing of a young raven was grey; but 'tis long ago, and I suppose they have altered since then."

Davis was an indefatigable worker on a settled plan of work, and did not waste an atom of his power on show of any sort. His notes to his friends bear the same relation to his published writings that hasty scratches in a painter's note-book bear to the glowing canvas. With his comrades, whom he saw daily, there was little need for correspondence, but to Smith O'Brien, who resided much in the country, he wrote often, and in his brief notes we get not only an insight into his own life, but a striking picture of the energy and diligence of the party. It was proposed to erect in Limerick an equestrian statue of the skilful soldier who defended the city against William III., and Davis was eager that the work might be entrusted to a competent artist.

"What of Sarsfield's statue?" (he writes to O'Brien). "I think Moore would like to do it. [Christopher Moore, who had made effective busts of Curran and Plunket, but proved on trial to be unequal to statues.] Kirk is not competent. The Ballad Poetry [second volume of the new Library of Ireland][1] has reached a third edition, and cannot be printed fast enough for the sale. It is every way good. Not an Irish Conservative of education but will read it, and be brought nearer to Ireland by it. That is a propagandism worth a thousand harangues such as you ask me to make. We are going to print (Torrens) M'Cullagh's Lecture on History and O'Donovan's Essays on Irish Names and Families in the series. Hugh O'Neill's life is written, and is admirably done. One of the volumes will be 'Thomond and the O'Briens,' dedicated to a living member of that clan, written by a Clare man of Conservative family, but this is a secret known only to you, to the author, and to myself. I have little chance of getting from town. Still I am in iron health. Many thanks for your kind invitation to Cahermoyle. Grey Porter is here; he is unchanged."[2]

And again—

"Grey Porter is here, full of projects and ambition. . . . . Here are two projects for you to digest. First and nearest, is to put you, John O'Connell, Duffy, and five or six more on the committee of the library in D'Olier Street (the Dublin library) at the coming election in February. It has thirteen thousand volumes, a noble and well-situated house, and only wants vigour and control to be a great civic library and literary institute. Porter is at work for his Polytechnic in connection with the Mechanics' Institutes, but that will be for mechanics and practical science. Secondly, a solemn meeting of Irish M.P.'s, corporators, etc., to discuss and issue a Declaration of Irish grievances, rights, and remedies. By a little diplomacy we might get through this without quarrel or illegality. . . . But these things should be considered and done by three or four men, and not spoken of till all was ripe."[3]

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[1] Ballad Poetry of Ireland. Edited by Charles Gavan Duffy.

[2] Cahermoyle Correspondence.

[3] Cahermoyle Correspondence. This latter project became in the end a Levée held on the anniversary of the Richmond imprisonment.

To the first note O'Brien replied:—

"I cannot but hope that the publication of the monthly volume will be of infinite value to the national cause if the intellectual and moral standard of the work can be kept as high as it ought to be. I like the two first numbers very much—I could not lay down the "Ballads" until I had read the whole volume. I am delighted with the article in yesterday's *Nation* respecting the prospect of a union between Orange and Green. It makes me for a moment believe that the dream of my life is about to be realised. I know that I could not recommend [in the Association] that a few hundred copies of this number of the *Nation* should be sent into the Orange districts without awakening jealousies which it is very unadvisable to raise; but I think it worth the consideration of you and Duffy, whether it would not be well to print this article on separate slips of paper, and send them by post into the heart of Fermanagh. Glorious indeed would be the spectacle of an union of the two great contending Irish parties, who have been taught to hate each other."

Davis's share of the work he projected was commonly to do half of it, and revise the other half. Here is an example. He wrote to O'Brien—

"Either you or I, or some one, should compile a short account of the geography, history, and statistics of Ireland, to be printed in fifty or sixty pages of a report, accompanied by a map, and circulated extensively. We must do more to educate the people. This is the only moral force in which I have any faith. Mere agitation is either bullying or preparation for war. I condemn the former; others of the party condemn the latter. But we all agree in the policy of education. . . . The members of the Franchise Committee should apply themselves, under your guidance, to the Grand Juries. I suppose we shall be able to work up some account of the Customs, Excise, and Post Office from Stritch's and Reynolds's reports. We should get Mr Mullin to make a report on the Poor Law Commission and its working. I shall make up the Education and Police as soon as the Estimates Report is out. Dillon and I have agreed to prepare facts, etc., on (land) tenures (Irish and foreign). Thus, I think, we are on the way of having proper materials for a statistical account of Ireland both internally and in relation to the British Empire."[1]

Dillon, who at the moment was on circuit, reported that his share of the joint task was not neglected, and described his first experiment as an advocate in terms which will help the reader to understand his modest, manly character.

"The best course I can pursue in the execution of this task is to draw up a report setting forth succinctly the Law of Landlord and Tenant, to be submitted immediately after my arrival in Dublin, and then with your assistance undertake a second, which will comprehend all the other branches of the subject, foreign tenures, changes to be suggested, etc. Perhaps it would be better not to bring any report before the Committee until our labours are completed, and then give the entire result together. . . . If I acquired any

[1] Cahermoyle Correspondence.

fame at Castlebar. I owe it all to the unblushing mendacity of my good friends the reporters. My speech was very weak, and I would be very much dissatisfied with myself if I had not the justification of its being a first speech to a jury, and made without even one minute to think of what I was to say. I am very much pleased at the way Barry is going on; his speeches were both exceedingly good, but particularly the first. Was not that a capital story he told about Sir Charles Napier? 'At them, you rascals, and fulfil the prophecies.'"

In another of Dillon's notes one may learn how the "ferocious hatred of the Saxon," with which the party have sometimes been credited, found expression in the private correspondence of its leaders. Their public censure of England was moderate compared to the reproaches which the philosopher David Hume discharged on that nation *apropos* of its injustice to Scotland; and was gracious courtesy compared to the habitual language of English writers respecting Ireland; and their private correspondence was more temperate and considerate than their public censure.

"You are going on gloriously in the *Nation*. There is one hint which, as an impartial spectator, I would be disposed to give, and that is, not to be guilty of incivility to Saxon sympathisers. Speaking fairly, I think they have treated us very well, and it would not be handsome to repay kindness even from them with ferocity and abuse. This hint was suggested not by anything I saw in the *Nation*, which I think has not gone one inch too far in that direction, but by some observations in the *Freeman*, prefacing a review of Venedey's book, extracted from the *Chronicle*. To assail all parties in England with indiscriminate abuse would be to follow up the blunders of O'Connell with respect to the Chartists. This, then, is the sum total of my preachment—to denounce vigorously all approaches towards compromise, but at the same time to speak with all respect and civility of those who stretch out the hand of friendship to us; and not to scrutinise too narrowly the motives of their friendship so long as they tender it unencumbered by conditions."[1]

If the fate of nations depends on the education of the young, Davis and his friends were engaged in no ignoble task. A generous Englishman, Arnold of Rugby, once conceived the project of removing to Ireland and taking pupils in a country where there was "more to be done than in any corner of the world." The basis of his system, as of Davis's, was that "Ireland was a distinct nation, entitled to govern

[1] Davis Papers.—Dillon to Davis, Ballaghaderrin, March 21st. MacNevin wrote in the same spirit:—"We are not animated by any malignant hatred of England or the English. No such thing. We saw revived in the glory of that great country more than the power of Imperial Rome. We recognised in her institutions the most formidable social system the world ever saw—great in arms, illustrious in arts, in science, and in literature; unlimited in empire, unbounded in the range of its power; but we saw in her too the malignant influences under which *our* national honour, *our* national glory, *our* national prosperity, withered, drooped, and died."

herself."[1] Englishmen may meditate with advantage on the problem whether a task which would be recognised as heroic in a stranger was unbecoming men of the Irish race.

To another of his friends, Denny Lane, Davis constantly opened his inmost mind on the transactions of the hour. Before the close of the imprisonment, he said :—

"Your stubborn resolve to better Cork, whether it likes it or not, is a great comfort to me. Stability, morals, and hard work—they'd better hell and make purgatory a paradise. . . . If there be a war now (with America), we must carry Repeal in six months, otherwise in three or four years, if we do our duty."

And somewhat later :—

"I learn that the best men in Cork wish to make you their representative. Our idea here was to work for your return for Mallow, but Cork is far better. I assume that both Murphy and Callaghan go out. . . . Whom do you propose to start? You and Hayes would do famously. Amongst your other duties you are to have charge of our most brilliant and kindly, but as yet headlong, friend MacNevin. All our party are most anxious to see you in the House. They are pressing me to go in, but I am positive against it. Some men of great powers are already girding their loins, and there is some prospect now of a good band of National M.P.'s. . . . We miss you much at our evening meetings, which have grown more serious."

And after Peel's concession was announced :—

"I am weary wishing you here. The events as to Maynooth will greatly weaken our enemies ; and Oregon promises well, though I trust nothing to it. For our hopes' sake do not let Cork be guilty of any meanness should the Queen come. This should be easy in Cork ; here it will be harder. But we are resolute and timely, and cannot fail ; so her coming shall be turned to good. Why don't you write more songs? Your last, to the air of 'The Foggy Dew,' was beautiful, and comes constantly on my recollection like a southern twilight. I have nearly recovered the cold winter and Repeal essays [he was one of the judges whose duty it was to read a long series of prize essays on Repeal], but have too many things to do, and so my life is a string of epigrams, which displeases me. I am left too much without affections ; but I am coldly happy and dutiful. . . . Duffy is well as a man can be who sees his young wife dying by inches. Barry and the rest of the set well and more serious than they used to be."

At the same time he engaged Maddyn's aid to make Clarence Mangan better known to the lovers of poetry in England ; but unsuccessfully :—

"I think you were a reader of the *University Magazine.* If so, you must have noticed the 'Anthologia Germanica,' 'Leaflets from the German

[1] Stanley's "Life of Arnold."

Oak,' 'Oriental Nights,' and other translations, and apparent translations of Clarence Mangan. He has some small salary in the College Library, and has to support himself and his brother. His health is wretched. Charles Duffy is most anxious to have the papers I have described printed in London, for which they are better suited than for Dublin. Now, you will greatly oblige me by asking Newby if he will publish them, giving Mangan £50 for the edition. If he refuse, you can say that Charles Duffy will repay him half the £50 should the work be a failure. Should he still declare against it, pray let me know soon what would be the best way of getting some payment and publication for Mangan's papers. Many of the ballads are Mangan's own, and are first-rate. Were they on Irish subjects, he would be paid for them here. They ought to succeed in London nigh as well as the 'Prout Papers.''

In his notes to me at this time I find a just and graphic estimate of the books and men of the Commonwealth era in Ireland, likely to be still useful to students :—

"Carte was an Ormondite and Whig-Tory. Leland only copies Carte. Castlehaven and most of the other men acted feebly and sometimes falsely. They were half Englishmen. Owen Roe supported the ultra men, who wanted to 'cut the painter,' and thought foreign help could be best got in the name of Catholicity. He was no bigot. When a chance of getting independence by an alliance with the Puritans offered he seized it. The furious rascality of the English Parliament alone baulked him. He was the only general (as distinct from a guerilla officer) on the Irish side, during the war. I do not reckon Ormond or Murrough O'Brien as on the Irish side, though they sometimes appeared so. Ormond was a time-serving, avaricious, hard-disciplined man. Owen was just, brave, energetic, a keeper of promises, a merciful enemy, a stern leader, who was loved, feared, and trusted by his own, and dreaded and respected by his foes. Carte himself says all this. He was the Wolfe Tone of his time. The just and thorough man to whom victory would have been complete success."

And an estimate of a notable book, which will interest another class :—

"I read some forty pages of this 'Festus,' and return it to avoid reading more. It is a marvellous anatomy of soul with a sunbeam for a lancet, but I don't want theories ; I have had too much of them, and of grief—the latter chiefly at my own shortcomings. But there are dishonoured truths (such as that scorn of repentance) in the book, and when I have a longer leisure I'll ask you for it again."

In 1843 the Repeal Association had superseded Parliament; the new literature began visibly to supersede the platform in 1845.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROVINCIAL COLLEGES.

When the Maynooth Bill had passed through the dangerous stages, the Government submitted their scheme of middle-class education. The measure was explained by Sir James Graham in a speech of notable frankness. In Ireland, he said, the creed of the great majority of the people had long been treated by the State as a hostile religion; in latter times this evil was gradually abated, civil liberty had been conferred on the Catholics, the penal laws were removed, or in process of removal; but such traces of this spirit as remained were nowhere more noxious than when they tainted public education. The Government desired to establish colleges for the middle classes on the principle of perfect religious equality. It was proposed to erect one college for the south, probably at Cork, one for the west at Galway or Limerick, and one for the north at Derry or Belfast. There would be no provision made for the residence of the students within the colleges, but they would be subject to academical control. There would be no interference, positive or negative, with their religious convictions; but religion would not be neglected; it was intended to give facilities for the endowment by private benefaction of professors of theology, to train the students in the religion of their forefathers, for which purpose the use of the lecture rooms would be afforded. A new university would probably be created to grant degrees to the students of these institutions. The professors would in the first instance be appointed by the Crown, afterwards this method would be abandoned.

The measure was well received in the House of Commons. Mr Roche and Mr Morgan John O'Connell, members of the Repeal Association, and Mr Wyse and Mr Ross, Nationalists of the Federal section, welcomed it as a substantial and liberal concession. But it did not escape criticism. Mr Sheil regretted that it was not made imperative on students to attend some religious instruction; and that the

Government had not placed themselves in communication with the Catholic bishops, as they had recently done with respect to the Maynooth Bill. Sir Robert Inglis, on behalf of good old stolid, respectable Toryism, insisted that there ought to be religious teaching in all State schools, but that it ought to be the teaching of the Church of England, and pronounced the plan to be a huge scheme of godless education.

The reception of the proposal in Ireland was for a time doubtful. A moiety of the Catholic Bishops, led by the Primate, O'Brien, Davis, the National Protestants universally, and the bulk of the writers and thinkers connected with the Repeal movement, greatly desired middle-class education for Catholics, and were ready to welcome it on any fair terms; for of all the monopolies which the minority enjoyed, the most fatal to the hopes of national progress was the monopoly of education.

The proposal was immediately taken into consideration by the General Committee. A majority regarded it as a measure as generous in design as the Maynooth Bill, and which a little care would render as unexceptionable. But the minority included O'Connell and Mr John O'Connell, who amazed the Committee by denouncing the scheme as altogether and designedly evil. After a prolonged conversation, which disclosed a rooted difference of opinion, Davis advised that under the circumstances the controversy should be kept out of the Association, and conducted as the opposition to the Bequests Bill had been conducted a year earlier—in the Press and by public meetings convened for the special purpose. But O'Connell announced, in peremptory terms, his intention of opening up the question at once in Conciliation Hall. He carried out his purpose at the next meeting; and his speech was devoted to a trenchant criticism of the scheme. He adopted the phraseology of Sir Robert Inglis and pronounced it "godless." But the Government might render it acceptable by making the colleges at Cork and Galway strictly Catholic, while the college at Derry might be Presbyterian as Trinity college was Protestant. He professed himself ready, however, to abandon his opposition if the Catholic Bishops approved of the scheme.[1]

Education is a subject of supreme importance, and O'Connell's opinion upon the Government proposal was naturally entitled to grave consideration; but nothing can be plainer than that he was not justified in carrying this vexed question into the Repeal Association. The object of that body was to repeal the Union, and its constitution had been

[1] Repeal Association, May 12th, 1845.

modified for the express purpose of combining men who desired a native Parliament without sacrificing their individual opinions on any other question. It was idle to talk of converting the North and uniting with the Federalists if it was necessary to accept in silence the opinion of O'Connell upon subjects of this nature, or to contest them with him in the Association of which he was the leader. By crossing the street he might have held meetings on the subject without breaking the fundamental pact, and without materially diminishing the force of his opposition. A year before he had agreed to exclude from the Association the consideration of the Bequests Bill, for reasons which applied with increased force to the present Bill.[1]

If he still hoped and desired to Repeal the Union, it was plainly necessary to exhibit in Conciliation Hall that consideration for the rights of the minority which would alone induce them to trust him with power in an Irish Parliament. His disregard of these motives brought to a sharp test the fidelity and affection of his associates; but so loyal was their recognition of his authority that his speech was allowed to pass without comment.

Later in the meeting, however, Mr John O'Connell spoke on the same subject, and spoke in a tone unusually fierce, offensive, and dictatorial.

"He felt," he said, "a degree of indignation to which it was impossible not to give utterance at the melancholy spectacle which some of the Irish members had made of themselves, by presuming to commit their countrymen to the abominable scheme of education proposed by Sir James Graham. Who or what were they, that they should presume to compromise the Irish people? It was the duty of the laity to leave the question in the hands of the bishops, and for this reason he would not expatiate at any length on the subject; but would endeavour to suppress for the present his feelings of abomination and execration at this infamous attempt of the English ministers to seduce and divide where they could not hope to conquer."

This was somewhat too much. The most respectable of the Irish members were assailed for expressing their opinion in Parliament upon a measure submitted in the ordinary manner for acceptance or rejection, and the young man of mediocre talents and discretion who denounced them thought himself entitled to pronounce a far more decisive judgment upon the measure in a place where men were not assembled to pass Acts of Parliament, but to procure the Repeal of the Union; and to pro-

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[1] "He consented, out of deference to the minority, to keep the Bequests Question out of the Association; why not this question also?" Cahermoyle Correspondence—Davis to O'Brien, December 10th, 1844.—Davis Papers.

nounce it with the full knowledge that he was speaking the sentiments of the minority only of the governing body. Dillon and Davis, who were present, felt they had no choice but to interpose. The world might make allowance for O'Connell's dictum being received in silence, but how would it interpret a similar indulgence being extended to the violence and arrogance of a personage of the calibre of Mr John O'Connell? All hope of winning the support of independent men was at an end if a stand were not made against this attempt to bully individual opinion. Davis spoke immediately.

"It was with feelings, of regret and a good deal of anxiety, he felt it necessary to express his respectful but positive dissent from some of the opinions of his friend Mr John O'Connell. He was not yet in a position, nor he feared were any of them, to judge of the details of a measure which was loosely stated by its proposer, and was not printed. He believed the people of this country were anxious to get academic education, no matter from whom it came; for it was a gift which could not be polluted by the hands through which it passed. A liberal endowment was proposed, for which he was grateful, but it was accompanied by principles of Government interference against which he protested; for he was not disposed to surrender the selection of the instructors of the youth of Ireland into the hands of an anti-Irish Government. In any country the principle of combined education of its youth he thought a good principle; but in Ireland, whose peculiar curse was religious dissension, that principle was invaluable. He was just as ready and willing as Mr John O'Connell to demand guarantees that the religion of the student should be protected from the propagandism or treachery of any of the professors. Were the religious discipline and instruction of the Catholic students entrusted to a Catholic dean, appointed by the Catholic Church authorities, and the religious conduct and training of Protestants and Presbyterians left to deans named by the Protestant and Presbyterian authorities, no Church could complain with any show of justice; and he believed it was quite consistent with the general system of endowment proposed that such an arrangement might be adopted. On these grounds he dissented from the opinions expressed by Mr John O'Connell, without, however, desiring to give unqualified approval to the measure."

O'Connell rose a second time to declare that the discussion was premature and ought to terminate.

"He could not blame his friend Mr Davis for having entered into it, for it had been commenced by the member for Kilkenny and himself; but it would be more judicious to reserve further discussion till the bill was printed. Mr Davis condemned the absence of religious instruction, but the very principle of the bill was to have no religious instruction in the projected colleges or under their influence.

"Mr DILLON interposed to remind O'Connell that this was a mistake. The Government measure by no means discouraged religious instruction; on the contrary, it contained an express provision empowering the establishment of a hall to each of the provincial colleges for the purpose of affording facilities to have the students instructed in the doctrines of their Church.

"Mr O'Connell: What a great advantage a hall is to teach religion in! Really my friend is laughing at me. The Government Education Bill gives us a hall, forsooth. Why, we could give them Conciliation Hall.

"Mr Dillon: I merely wished to set Mr O'Connell right when he stated that the bill discountenanced religious instruction. That is not the fact. Religious instruction was encouraged by the bill.

"Mr O'Connell: Religious instruction is not encouraged by the bill which Sir James Graham brought forward; it is discouraged by it. Religious instruction is to be carefully excluded from the new colleges. Such are the terms of the bill."

It is not difficult to understand the motives that lay at the root of this controversy. The young men were Catholics and Protestants, united like brothers in a generous design; many of them had been educated together, and had learned to love each other when hearts are fresh and open, and they hoped to see the same fraternity extended throughout the nation by the same means. They knew that Catholic students in the only university in the island were lured to apostacy and hypocrisy by the exclusive system on which it was founded, and they were impatient to see colleges established on the principle of religious equality, where these temptations would disappear. They had no confidence in the judgment of Mr John O'Connell, and a very lively suspicion that he was more anxious to place the Young Irelanders in antagonism to some of the Catholic bishops than to promote or thwart any system of education. It was not necessary to doubt that, *cæteris paribus*, he preferred separate education; but they were persuaded that he carried the question into the Association, and provoked the debate which he knew must ensue, in pursuance of a design to represent them as indifferent to religion. O'Connell, as the Catholic leader, had his vigilance naturally awakened by the nature of the question, and it is probable his pride was hurt by the intrusion of any other opinion into a domain where his own used to be supreme. It is easy to misconceive critics, and he was surrounded by persons certain to put the worst construction upon any opposition to his will. He was the prey of an insidious disease, and, added to all these influences, he was perplexed by the difficulty, which has embarrassed so many kings and tribunes, of securing the succession to his authority for a feeble pretender; and he was ready to make inordinate sacrifices for this end.

To obtain education for the Catholic middle-class, and save the Association from disruption, was a task that tested the energies of the men who had both objects at heart. The *Nation* took a decided stand with this latter party. In the number following the debate Davis and the editor wrote upon the question, and it is curious to note how the

Protestant and the Catholic Nationalist, treating the same subject, relies each upon arguments and feelings drawn from the experience of his own class. Davis unburthened the heart of a man sick of the feuds and prejudices which had divided the nation into two hostile camps. The Irish had been made and kept serfs because they were ignorant and divided. The Protestant hated the Catholic and oppressed him, the Catholic hated the Protestant and refused to trust him. Any plan which would strengthen the soul of Ireland with knowledge, and knit the creeds in liberal and trusting friendship, would be better for her than if corn and wine were scattered from every cloud. If such a project could not be discussed in a reasonable and discreet way, the progress of the people to self-government was a progress to shameful ruin. The objections to separate education were immense, the reasons for it were reasons for separate life, for mutual animosities, for penal laws, for religious wars. United education was the principle accepted by Ireland in the National Schools, the principle favourable to that Union of Irishmen, for want of which Ireland was in rags and chains. An adequate provision for religious discipline was not to be dispensed with, and the appointment of the professors by the Government would be a fatal agent of seduction. Within five years after Lord Clare's Act gave the Government the appointment of assistant barristers the county bench was filled with bigots, blockheads, and partisans, and the bar, once the bodyguard of independence, became the pretorians of the Castle. The literary class must not be corrupted by the same method. But these blemishes on the scheme might be removed.

On my part I appealed directly to the Catholic middle class from which I sprang. I bade them remember that early and systematic training was among the most precious of the advantages which we had lost with the loss of a national existence. It was the basis of all practical success in life; and in this training—whether scholastic, social, or professional—we were behind nearly every civilised nation. After centuries in which the education of Catholics had been prohibited as a crime, or contemptuously tolerated but never fostered, the English minister offered us a system of large scope fettered by injurious restrictions and conditions. What was it fit we should do with it? What we were clearly not to do with it was to reject it with hatred and clamour. Of all races the Celts most needed and most profited by discipline; and the penalty we were paying for the want of it was of a very practical kind. While trained and educated Scotchmen were scattered over the world, administering its offices of trust and emolu-

ment "from Indus to the Pole," our poor exiles were sweating under its heaviest burthens and stooping to its meanest offices. Our plain duty was to strive that the objectionable provisions of the bill should be amended. As respects the objection of non-residence, non-residence was the practice in most of the Catholic colleges on the continent, and the dangers it threatened could be guarded against by a system of licensed lodging-houses under the superintendence of deans appointed by the ordinary. Another objection was well-founded—there must be two professors of history. The Middle Ages, "the Reformation," the Revolution, were fields of inquiry where concurrence was impossible. But our duty was to amend, not to reject, the scheme.

The members of the Association who held these views were not confined to the Young Ireland section. Several conspicuous men who adhered to O'Connell in the subsequent disruption of the body, and several who retired from public life rather than take sides in that unhappy contest, were eager that the bill might be rendered acceptable. A statement of their views was prepared, embodying a positive pledge to oppose any settlement which did not provide amply for religious education, and was privately presented to O'Connell in the hope of stopping further debate in public. For a moment it seemed probable that this end would be attained. At a meeting of the Association following the one just described, O'Connell stated that it was not his intention to express any opinion on the Education Bill upon that occasion; a meeting of the Catholic bishops would be held during the week, and he would accept and adhere to whatever decision they might arrive at respecting the religious portion of the measure.

O'Brien was absent from these debates, perhaps intentionally, for he shrank with wise forbearance from any contest with O'Connell. But a man cannot long escape the responsibilities of his position. Davis kept him acquainted with the proceedings in committee and urged him to resume his place. "I implore of you," he said, "to come to town before Saturday. If this difficulty be got over, we have little to fear in future."[1]

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[1] Cahermoyle Correspondence.—Although O'Brien was in intimate relations with several of the Young Irelanders, he belonged at this time as little to their section as to the other. He aimed to maintain a complete neutrality, doubtless with a view to intervene from time to time more effectually in the common interest. But friendly critics were of opinion that he was sometimes more careful of his personal dignity than became a leader, who must be content to run risks. At this time he sent a letter to the committee respecting the colleges. Davis moved that it should be read at the next public meeting, but O'Connell took violent exception to this course—though why O'Brien should not be heard on a topic which Mr John O'Connell felt free to debate is difficult to conceive. To avert a catastrophe Davis and O'Loghlen assumed the

The return of O'Brien, and in a much larger degree the decision of the bishops, were awaited as decisive factors in the contest. The conference of the Catholic bishops had a result creditable to their sense and moderation. They resolved to accept the bill, provided certain amendments were made to protect the faith and morals of Catholic students; but failing these amendments to reject it. The amendments were neither exacting nor inordinate. They claimed that a fair proportion of the professors should be Catholics, whose moral conduct was vouched for by their respective prelates. That a Board of Trustees, of whom the bishops of the province where the college was established should be members, would be entitled to remove any officer convicted of an attempt to tamper with faith or morals; and that a Catholic chaplain should be appointed to each college to superintend the religious instruction of the Catholic students. If these concessions were not made the measure would be dangerous and inadmissible.

The supporters of the measure saw with delight that the bishops accepted the principle of mixed education, provided there were adequate provisions against proselytism; and for such provisions they were all ready to contend. Public meetings of Catholic and Protestant gentlemen and clergymen in Cork, Limerick, and Galway also approved of the bill, subject to certain amendments. The Catholics had not the least desire to see education divorced from religious sentiment and religious obligations; they would have been well content in a Catholic country to have made the Catholic Church the chief teacher, but they were alarmed at the risk of their children running the race of life weighted with the burthens which they had themselves endured. The question seemed in a fair way of being settled. But O'Connell and Mr John O'Connell, though they had promised to accept the decision of the bishops, had gone too far to follow moderate counsels; they seemed to regard their personal authority and influence as depending on the defeat of the measure.

At the subsequent meeting of the Association, Smith O'Brien made a speech designed to promote peace. Ireland, he said, was a religious

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responsibility of postponing the letter to another day, and this exercise of discretion offended O'Brien more, I think, than was just or reasonable. Davis excused himself with good temper, "I should not have consented to the holding over of your letter, but that had it been read yesterday it would have led to a violent debate which would almost necessarily have broken up the Association. There was no second opinion as to the danger. Under such a peril I and others who concurred in your views acted as we did, though certainly I felt that our doing so might cause you much annoyance, and would be a very great liberty—one that I at least shall never take again."

nation, and he honoured the solicitude which had been exhibited by Catholics to secure religious education. He saw no difficulty, however, in engrafting on the Government plan some adequate provision for this purpose. He concurred generally in the fairness of the claims made by the Bishops, and differed from his friend Mr John O'Connell in his opinion that Catholics and Protestants should have separate colleges. It was extremely desirable that there should be united education in order that young men should cherish those friendly associations in youth which subdue the animosities of manhood.[1]

O'Connell, who followed, spoke for two hours. He came there, he said, to denounce the bill from one end to the other. If he were silent heretofore or spoke only his individual opinion, now, as a Catholic, and for the Catholics of Ireland, he unhesitatingly and entirely condemned this execrable measure.

"A more nefarious attempt at profligacy and corruption never disgraced any minister. The *Evening Post* had recently published an anonymous letter in defence of it, which he knew to be the production of a Catholic clergyman; and in this publication the writer said he had before him the private letter of a Cabinet Minister on the subject, written in August 1844. In August 1844 the State prisoners were suffering unjust captivity, and at that time a Cabinet Minister was writing to a Catholic clergyman in Dublin to win the Catholic clergy to support an Administration which had employed a packed jury and prejudiced judges to obtain their conviction! But the resolution of the bishops defeated their chance of success. The bishops had declared the system as proposed would be dangerous to the faith and morals of Catholic pupils. Was he to be blamed, then, or was the member for Kilkenny to be blamed, for their early resistance to it? Would one independent man be appointed to a professorship under the measure? Political and religious renegadism would be the highest qualification for office. But such a measure would not be accepted. He offered Sir Robert Peel his congratulations upon his success in this experiment! He rejoiced to believe that all symptoms of division and dissension in the Association were at an end. All were agreed in condemning the ministerial measure in its present shape; they were all ready to accept a bill based upon just and tolerant principles, and founded on fair and reasonable terms."

The debate was continued by Mr John O'Connell, who denied that the memorial of the bishops favoured mixed education; and Mr M. J. Barry, who said he was utterly indifferent by what name it was called, but he was in favour of such a system as the memorial of the bishops contemplated, in which ample provision would be made for religious education, and ample guarantees for faith and morals, but where Protestants and Catholics would grow up together in mutual friendliness and confidence.

Up to this point, a question full of difficulty had been debated with

[1] Repeal Association, May 26th.

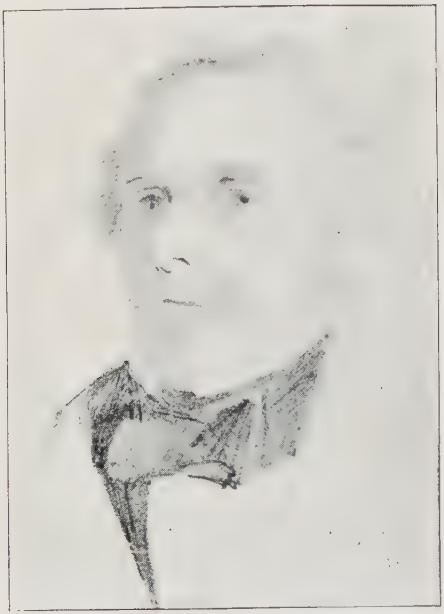
mutual courtesy and forbearance. But the controversy was not destined so to end. There was hanging about the Association and the press at that time a young man named Conway, a person of good ability and loose principles, ready of speech and of singular self-possession, but whose want of conduct had robbed him of all personal weight. He had spoken occasionally in Conciliation Hall, and written occasionally in the national journals, and had obtained all the success which is awarded to cleverness without character. It is too little to say that he had won confidence from nobody; he belonged to a class to whom confidence is never given. On political questions his brain, when not disordered by excesses, made him worth listening to, but on questions of morals or ethics his pretending to have any conviction would have been regarded by those who knew him as an offensive jest. He was by birth and education a Catholic, but the loose hold his professed creed had upon him was illustrated a few years later by his accepting the bounty of a Proselytising Association to profess himself a convert to Protestantism. This person stepped forward to do work which a man of character would have shrunk from—which Mr John O'Connell was afraid to undertake, except in secret whispers and private correspondence—to suggest that Davis, Dillon, and their associates were favourable to the measure because they were indifferent to religion. Whether he was an agent or a volunteer was somewhat doubtful at the time; but it is possible he was a volunteer, for he was labouring under a recent personal grievance. Four or five weeks earlier he had presented himself as a candidate at the Eighty-two Club, and had been rejected. He assumed, rightly enough, I daresay, that the Young Irelanders had voted against him; and he privately appealed to O'Brien to do him justice, reminding him that he was "a Clare man with a cross of Tipperary";[1] but as he got no redress he was ripe for mischief. He broke into the debate by announcing that he was entrusted with a contribution to the Repeal funds from Armagh.

"More than a thousand years had passed over since the apostle of Irish Christianity had planted the standard of the cross on the heights of pagan Armagh. He believed St Patrick was a Roman Catholic; some claimed him as a Protestant; he had once heard him described as a Presbyterian; but at anyrate he was no friend of masked infidelity, of mixed education. His learned friend who preceded him was for the bill, and against the bill; there was an imbecility in his speech characteristic of his party and his principles; a party which the strong hand of O'Connell must not exterminate, but wain. On an essential point Mr Barry declared himself 'utterly indifferent.' Utterly indifferent! What a sentiment for a Catholic! Ireland was not indifferent

[1] Letter to Smith O'Brien dated 28th April 1845.—Cahermoyle Correspondence.

T. F. CONWAY.

Two sketches by
HENRY MACMANUS, R.H.A.



RICHARD BARRETT.

to the memorials which his own relative left behind him in the Church of God. Such a reputation as he had won was worth far more than the temporary applause of a coterie or the cheers of a baffled faction. The sentiment triumphant in the meeting that day was a sentiment common to all Ireland. The Calvinist or Episcopalian of the North, the Unitarian, the Sectaries, every man who had any faith in Christianity, was resolved that it should neither be robbed or thieved by a faction half acquainted with the principles they put forward, and not at all comprehending the Irish character or the Irish heart. Were his audience prepared to yield up old discord or sympathies to the theories of Young Ireland? As a Catholic and as an Irishman, while he was ready to meet his Protestant friends upon an equal platform, he would resent any attempt at ascendancy, whether it came from honest Protestants or honest professing Catholics."

This tipsy rhodomontade would have been forgotten as soon as it was uttered if O'Connell had not raised it into importance by taking Mr Conway under his patronage. Mr Doheny describes him as waving his cap repeatedly over his head during its delivery and cheering vociferously.[1] With something of the habitual ingratitude of sovereigns and dictators, he forgot the most substantial services in a moment of wrath; and the *nisi prius* advocate of forty years' experience was neither wanting in devices to embarrass his opponents nor too scrupulous in using them. Davis, who followed Mr Conway, glanced good-humouredly at the grotesque contrast between the man and the speech by calling him his "very Catholic friend." O'Connell interrupted him to ask if it was a crime to be a Catholic, and suggested that Davis was sneering at Catholics! Fence of this sort had perhaps been successful in former conflicts, and against a different class of antagonists, but directed against a man like Thomas Davis, in the presence of those to whom his life and labours were familiar, who loved him more than their own kith and kin, it proved a perilous mistake. As the contest was a turning-point in the national movement, it is fit that it should be set out in detail.

"I have not," Davis said on rising, "more than a few words to say in reply to the useful, judicious, and spirited speech of my old college friend, my Catholic friend, my very Catholic friend, Mr Conway.

"Mr O'CONNELL: It is no crime to be a Catholic, I hope.

"Mr DAVIS: No, surely no, for——

"Mr O'CONNELL: The sneer with which you used the word would lead to the inference.

"Mr DAVIS: No, sir; no. My best friends, my nearest friends, my truest friends, are Catholics. I was brought up in a mixed seminary, where I learned to know, and, knowing, to love, my Catholic countrymen, a love that shall not be disturbed by these casual and unhappy dissensions. Disunion, alas, destroyed our country for centuries. Men of Ireland, shall it destroy it again? Will you take the boys of Ireland in their earliest youth

[1] Doheny's "Felon's Track." "Mr O'Connell took off his cap, waved it repeatedly over his head, and cheered vociferously" (p. 43).

and deepen the difference between them? Will you sedulously exclude them from knowing the virtues, the genius, the spirit, the affections of each other? If you do you will vainly hope that they who were carefully separated in youth will be united in manhood and stand together for their country. Sir, I rise to express my strong approval of the memorial of the Catholic bishops. That memorial contains four propositions, and to every one of them I yield my cordial concurrence. The first of these propositions demands that a 'fair proportion' of the professors and office-bearers in the new colleges shall be members of the Roman Catholic Church. That is a just and reasonable demand. Mark the words, a 'fair proportion,' not the entire, but 'a proportion'; meaning beyond doubt—meaning beyond reasonable dispute—that the remainder should be Protestants. That, sir, is mixed instruction. The same clause demands, too, that the bishops of each province shall be members of the governing board. Note the words 'of which,' not exclusively composing the board, but 'of which' the Roman Catholic Bishops shall be members. That, sir, is mixed management. The second clause is marked by the same care of Catholic rights, and the same adoption, by necessary inference, of mixed education. It demands that in some specified branches the Roman Catholic students shall be taught by Roman Catholic professors—the unmistakable meaning of this demand is for separate chairs in a mixed college. Separate chairs for the teaching of those subjects which cannot be taught by the professors of one creed without probable offence or injustice to the creed of others. I say that is a just demand. I fully concur also in the purpose of the third proposition in this memorial, which suggests that 'if any president, vice-president, professor, or office-bearer shall be convicted before the Board of Trustees of attempting to undermine the faith or injure the morals of any student, he shall be immediately removed from his office by the same board'—that is, by the board of which the Roman Catholic Prelates are to form a part. And now, sir, I come to the last proposition. 'That as it is not contemplated that the students shall be provided with lodgings in the new colleges, there shall be Roman Catholic chaplains to superintend the moral and religious instruction of the Roman Catholic students.' I say that such a provision is most just and most necessary. I say now, what I said before on this day fortnight, I denounce this bill for not containing such a provision.

"Mr O'Connell: You praised the bill.

"Mr Davis: I praised the bill on certain grounds, and on these grounds I praise it now, and will praise it again. The proposal runs that the appointment of each chaplain, with a suitable salary, shall be made on the recommendation of the Roman Catholic bishop in the diocese in which the college is situate, and that the same prelate shall have full power and authority to remove such Roman Catholic chaplain from his situation. 'Signed, Daniel Murray, chairman.' There could be no fitter name to authenticate that document. Dr Murray carries into the academical colleges the same principles that regulate the National Board, of which he is one of the most learned, esteemed, and honoured governors."

Mr Davis concluded his brief, persuasive, statement in these terms:—

"I offer the tribute of my sincere respect to that memorial, to the principles on which it is founded, and to the reasonings—for I have heard precisely what they were—which induced the bishops to adopt it. I denounce the bill as containing no provision for the religious discipline of

the boys taken away from the paternal shelter. Beyond all, I denounce the bill for giving the Government a right to appoint and dismiss professors, a right to corrupt and intimidate. For these reasons, I and those who think with me are prepared to give this bill in its present shape an unflinching opposition, and I sit down repeating my cordial adherence to this memorial."

Nothwithstanding the opposition of O'Connell, Davis's speech was received with great favour by the Association. The character of the man, the lucidity of his statement, and the singleness of purpose with which he was moved, made a manifest impression. O'Connell, who had already spoken for two hours, thought it necessary to reply to him, and he clutched at the weapon heretofore abandoned to hands like those of Mr Conway.

"One point," he exclaimed, "Mr Davis omitted altogether. He did not read the resolution adopted at the meeting of the prelates, wherein they declared that they felt themselves, anxious as they were to extend the advantages of education, bound to withhold their approbation from the proposed system, as they deemed it dangerous to the faith and morals of the Catholic people. The system was met with the unequivocal and unanimous condemnation of the venerated and esteemed body. The principle of the bill has been lauded by Mr Davis, and was advocated in a newspaper professing to be the organ of the Roman Catholic people of this country, but which I emphatically pronounce to be no such thing. The section of politicians styling themselves the Young Ireland Party, anxious to rule the destinies of this country, start up and support this measure. There is no such party as that styled 'Young Ireland.' There may be a few individuals who take that denomination on themselves. I am for Old Ireland. 'Tis time that this delusion should be put an end to. Young Ireland may play what pranks they please. I do not envy them the name they rejoice in. I shall stand by Old Ireland; and I have some slight notion that Old Ireland will stand by me."

When O'Connell sat down consternation was universal; he had commenced a war in which either by success or failure he would bring ruin to the national cause. Smith O'Brien and Henry Grattan, who were sitting near him, probably remonstrated, for in a few minutes he rose again to withdraw the nickname of "Young Ireland" as he understood it was disclaimed by those to whom it was applied. Davis immediately rejoined that he was glad to get rid of the assumption that there were factions in the Association. He never knew any other feeling among his friends, except in the momentary heat of passion, but that they were bound to work together for Irish nationality. They were bound, among other motives, by a strong affection toward Daniel O'Connell; a feeling which he himself had habitually expressed in his private correspondence with his dearest and closest friends.

At this point the strong self-restrained man paused from emotion, and broke into irrepressible tears. He was habitually neither emotional

nor demonstrative, but he had been in a state of nervous anxiety for hours; the cause for which he had laboured so long and sacrificed so much was in peril on both hands. The Association might be broken up by a conflict with O'Connell, or it might endure a worse fate if it became despicable by suppressing convictions of public duty at his dictation. With these fears were mixed perhaps the recollection of the generous forbearance from blame and the promptitude to praise which marked his own relations to O'Connell, and the painful contrast with these sentiments presented by the scene he had just witnessed. He shed tears from the strong passion of a strong man. The leaders of the Commons of England, the venerable Coke, John Pym, and Sir John Eliot, men of iron will, wept when Charles I. extinguished the hope of an understanding between the people and the Crown. Tears of wounded sensibility choked the utterance of Fox when Burke publicly renounced his friendship. Both the public and the private motives united to assail the sensibility of Davis.

O'Connell, whose instincts were generous and cordial, and who was only suspicious from training and violent by set purpose, immediately interposed with warm expressions of goodwill. He had never felt more gratified than by this evidence of regard. If Mr Davis were overcome, it overcame him also; he thanked him cordially, and tendered him his hand. The Association applauded their reconciliation with enthusiasm. After this episode Davis resumed:—

"He and his friends, in their anxiety to co-operate with O'Connell, had often sacrificed their own predilections, and never opposed him except when they were convinced in conscience that it was a duty to do so. He trusted their disagreement would leave no sting behind. If there had been any harshness of feeling, if any person had made use of private influence to foster dissension and to misrepresent them to each other, he would forgive it, if the offence were not repeated. He would sit down with a prayer to Almighty God that the people of this country and the leaders of the people might continue united in the pursuit of liberty, in which they were so often defeated before at the moment of its apparent fruition; and with a supplication to God that they might not be defeated again."

These were almost the last words of counsel Thomas Davis uttered, face to face with the people whom he loved so truly and served so well.

This contest not only produced a painful impression at the moment, but left behind poisonous seeds of distrust and division. It probably had still more disastrous results too subtle to be traced. Before three months elapsed the younger and more hopeful nature was extinguished in death. Before two years the historic leader was carried to his grave, having outlived in the interval the power and popularity upon which

he relied so proudly for dominating in this contest. Davis's death has been referred to this transaction as one of its proximate causes; but this is a mistake. He bore away a wound which bled inwardly, but his nature was too robust to sink under it. He had the strongest incitement to live in the desire to carry his cause to success, and in the recently plighted love of one who possessed all his affections.

The reflex action of that encounter on O'Connell's influence was seriously detrimental at the moment, and perhaps finally destructive. A burning sense of wrong was excited by the foul blow struck at Davis. It made men more suspicious of the justice of O'Connell's criticism and readier to canvass his motives. The more thoughtful knew that, of the two combatants, Ireland could least spare the one of whom she knew next to nothing. The popular organisation was mainly the work of O'Connell, but the growth of national opinion among the middle class, the passionate adherence of the new generation to its aims, the respect which it had gained among opponents for breadth and sincerity, the practical projects on which it was employed, and the Protestant recruits it had won, were attributable in a far larger degree to Davis. They were persuaded that another O'Connell, distant as might be his coming, would arise before another Davis. One was a leader credited by the world, not only with the prodigious work which he actually performed, but with much that was done by others. He was living in the midst of his private friends; his nearest relatives were his agents and associates. He received an income from the people far beyond the official salary of the President of the American Republic, or of the Prime Minister of any constitutional kingdom in Europe; and he controlled an expenditure which approximated to the civil list of European sovereigns. In his youth he had tasted the supreme joy of self-sacrifice for the cause he loved, but he had long been an uncrowned king in authority and inviolability, and had come to regard the interest of his dynasty and the interest of the nation as necessarily identical, and to treat dissent as treason. The other, in becoming a Repealer, had separated in action from his family and from many of his familiar friends, and had relinquished the chance of success in his profession. He employed his splendid abilities in the public cause without reward and almost without recognition. He had never accepted so much as a postage stamp from the Repeal funds, or from any other public source, except the legitimate payment of his work as a journalist. While O'Connell's reputation was like a great river, fed by many streams which were lost in the current they helped to swell, Davis was only known,

outside the circle of his friends, by adversaries who industriously disparaged him. He was content to be nothing in the common view, to see other men credited with his work; and he would have applauded and blessed any human being, friend or enemy, who could have carried the Irish cause to success.

One of the greatest resources at O'Connell's command, had he been able and willing to use it, was the band of young men who stood, as one of them sang "like sheathéd swords around him," and now it seemed to sober spectators that co-operation between them was at an end. But if this calamity came the young men were resolved it should not come by any fault of theirs. In the next *Nation* the final reconciliation was dwelt upon more than the original dispute, and the people were admonished not to be alarmed by temporary controversies. Exact concurrence on public questions was only to be found among the ignorant and slavish; but, on the other hand, it had been the custom of the committee to prevent discussion in public on questions where differences were serious, and the maintenance of this rule was essential to the existence of the Association.

For a time there was a settled truce. At the next meeting O'Connell maintained complete silence on the bill, and his example was followed on all sides. In the course of the week he left town to attend Repeal demonstrations in the South, and an interval seemed to be secured to heal the recent scars. But Mr John O'Connell, who remained, apparently interpreted the truce to mean that his opponents were to be silent, but that his tongue was to be unchecked. He proceeded as if his aim from the beginning had been to make the continuance of Davis and his friends in the Association impossible; and writing a generation later, after having conversed on the subject many times with men on both sides of the controversy, I believe that such was indeed his aim. At the next meeting he announced from the general committee a petition against vesting the appointment of professors in the Government, reminded the Association that points upon which there was a difference of opinion ought to be avoided; and then proceeded to reiterate all his original objections in a speech of two hours' duration, fortifying them by letters from clergymen who denounced the measure as infidel. For the support which Protestant Nationalists gave the bill he accounted with charming simplicity. It was no doubt with an ultimate view to proselytism. He was sure they would use no unworthy means to injure the Catholic faith, but, being conscientious Protestants, it was natural to suppose that anything which would draw adherents away from it would meet their sanction and approval.

O'Brien warmly denied any such wish or purpose, and Henry Grattan deprecated the introduction of topics which gave the discussion in Conciliation Hall a polemical character. A more formidable and dangerous critic was looking on at these transactions. A country clergyman, unknown to his audience, for he was attending the Association for the first time, but of a scholarly and cultivated mien which arrested the eye, got up and declared that it had been his intention to dissent from some of the opinions expressed by Mr John O'Connell, but that gentleman had privately requested him to desist, and as it was a first request he could not think of refusing it. The priest who was silenced on this occasion often afterwards spoke with trenchant emphasis on the policy and practice of Conciliation Hall, for this stranger was Father John Kenyon, of Templederry.

When the committee re-assembled they insisted on the truce being binding on all, and at the succeeding meeting of the Association O'Neil Daunt, who was in the chair, announced that an understanding had been arrived at not to discuss the details of the "College Bill" in the absence of O'Connell. But the decision came too late; a feeling of foul play and want of faith had been created which it was impossible to eradicate.[1]

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[1] A totally unexpected occurrence is seldom fairly judged at the moment, and Davis's generous sensibility pained and wounded some of his friends. They thought he had lowered himself, and their affection for him made them angry. MacNevin wrote to O'Brien that rather than submit to the tyranny over individual opinion exercised in this controversy he would retire from public life. "As for Davis, I know not what to say—'exit Tilburina in tears.' What was there in the vulgar assault made on himself and his friends to authorise these pearly drops or this quivering emotion?" (Cahermoyle Correspondence.)

Denny Lane, writing to Davis himself, implied the same sort of objection "Your conduct at the Hall," he said, "except 'the tears' was unimpeachable. The attack on you was altogether unexpected—and undeserved, You did nothing to provoke a collision, the only thing I can find fault with was your manner in the Committee to O'Connell, which I was informed of by a person who could scarcely be mistaken in a matter of the kind. This was the real cause of the split, it made O'Connell anxious to abuse you if he could. He has many faults, but we must take him as he is—he is the *withe* that binds together the bundle of twigs . . ." (Davis Papers.)

And for myself, I cannot remember without a sting of shame, that when I next met my friend I saluted him by reciting in a bantering tone the burden of a song in the "Spirit of the Nation"—

"We must not weep for you, dear land,
We must not weep for you!"

We were thinking too much of the humiliation of our comrade. Davis was overwhelmed by the risk to the public cause.

The weekly censor, who has always taken so liberal and humane a view of Irish affairs, interposed with a letter from Mr Punch (of *Punch*) to Mr Davis (of the *Nation*), in which the latter was graciously assured that since Marat there had not been so objectionable a person; and turned into contemptuous ridicule for presuming to maintain his conviction against Mr O'Connell. The writer of the homily was understood to be Mr Thackeray.

CHAPTER VIII

THE OPPOSITION TO THE BILL.

An agreement was come to in the Association that O'Connell and Smith O'Brien should attend the House of Commons to demand amendments in the "Colleges Bill." It seems probable that amendments, substantially yielding the chief points insisted upon in the bishops' memorial, might have heen obtained. With our subsequent knowledge of Sir Robert Peel's career, it is safe to assume that he was willing to make as large concessions as the prejudices of his supporters would permit. In the previous session he had given significant evidence of his good dispositions by making, through the Executive, a concession which the House of Commons could scarcely have been induced to sanction. His "Charitable Bequests Act" provided that when it was necessary to determine who was the actual holder of any Catholic benefice to which a bequest was made, the determination should be entrusted exclusively to the Catholic bishops and Catholic laymen among the Commissioners. It was passionately objected by certain Catholic theologians that this provision interfered with the rights of the diocesan, to whom the decision canonically belongs. To meet this objection the Irish Attorney-General was instructed to frame a regulation under which the Commission were required to accept the report of the diocesan as final evidence of the fact; and this concessionary regulation was adopted. The "Maynooth Act" had afterwards given complete satisfaction by its scrupulous respect for Catholic feeling, and there was no reason to doubt that he would bring the same temper to the present measure, which was framed with the same object, of conciliating the Irish people. But his difficulties with his supporters were greatly increased by the unmeasured censure to which the bill had been subjected. If it were predetermined to reject it, unmeasured censure was permissible; but if amendments were contemplated, it was an obvious rule of prudence to insist only on such concessions as it might

be possible to carry through Parliament, and not to ask them in terms which should increase the difficulty of obtaining them.

During this critical interval Davis laboured without stint to preserve peace and to save the national cause.

"O'Connell goes over [to London] to-night [Sunday, 15th June]"—he wrote to O'Brien, already in London—"and so much the better. The effort of the Repeal members (to amend the bill) should be made with all their force. It is also desirable that he should be removed for a while from the persons who suggest suspicions, alarm his Catholic feelings, and stimulate his large but vehement soul. 'Tis marvellous what evil influence such little creatures can exercise over so great a mind. We had a most serious affair in Committee yesterday, in which all Protestants who interfered in the education question were denounced in the strongest courteous language by O'Connell and his son, and by other parties in a rougher fashion."

Some impatient spirits, persuaded that a conspiracy to drive them out was formed, wished to anticipate it by a secession, but against this course Davis stood firm. Two days later he again wrote to O'Brien.[1]

"O'Loghlen [Sir Colman] and all whom I have consulted are firm against secession. O'Loghlen proposes, and I agree with him fully, that if O'Connell on his return should force the question on Conciliation Hall, an amendment should be moved that the introduction of such a question, against the wish of a numerous and respectable portion of the Committee, is contrary to the principles of the Association and likely to injure the cause of Repeal. A steady elaborate discussion for a number of days would end in the withdrawal of the motion and amendment, or in rendering the motion, if carried, powerless. An explanation would follow, and—the cause would still be safe. Secession would give Ireland up without a contest to the bigots; it would besides be criminal and hardly honourable to secede, as if, forsooth, we had joined a retinue, not a free league, and could take up our hats and abandon the cause on receiving offence or injustice. . . . Once this peril is over all will be safe."

Much as he desired a good measure he knew it might be bought too dearly. A few days later he says, "I have been, and am, doing all in my power to prevent the injurious results of the differences on the "Colleges Bill," and have been fortunate enough to put an end to a discussion in Committee which was tending fast to mischief. In my mind any advantages to be derived from the bill are not worth even a moment's division amongst us."[2]

John O'Connell's design, though necessarily suspected from the incidents all pointing in one direction, was only suspected. But Davis could no longer shut out of his calculations the possibility of resolutions being proposed to which he and his friends must refuse their assent.

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[1] Cahermoyle Correspondence, June 17th.
[2] Cahermoyle Correspondence, June 21st.

"I will not interfere again till an attempt be made to pledge the Association to evil resolutions. If the O'Connells wish, they can ruin the agitation (not the country) in spite of anyone. Between unaccounted funds, bigotry, billingsgate, Tom Steel missions, crude and contradictory dogmas, and unrelieved stupidity, any cause and any system could be ruined. America too, from whence arose 'the cloud in the west' which alarmed Peel, has been deeply offended, and but for the *Nation* there would not now be one Repeal club in America. Still we have a sincere and numerous people, a rising literature, an increasing staff of young, honest, trained men, Peel's splitting policy [a policy which split up the Tories], the chance of war, the chance of the Orangemen, and a great, though now misused, organisation; and, perhaps, next autumn a rally may be made. It will require forethought, close union, indifference to personal attack, and firm measures. At this moment the attempt would utterly fail; but parties may be brought down to reason by the next four months. Again, I tell you, you have no notion of the loss sustained by John O'Connell's course. A dogged temper and a point of honour induce me to remain in the Association at every sort of sacrifice, and will keep me there while there is a chance, even a remote one, of doing good in it." [2]

O'Brien replied in terms very characteristic of the man. He suspected that he, and those who shared his opinions, had been placed in a false position when they promised such unmeasured resistance, unless certain provisions of the bill were altered; but at all hazards they must be faithful to their promise.

"It is quite true that the tone taken by John O'Connell has done infinite mischief, and upon this point I have not concealed my opinion from him. But I am not disposed on that account to despond. The care which ought to be taken by the friends of mixed education with regard to the matter should not be less firm because we do not agree with the sentiments which he has put forward. We have declared that we would repudiate the College Scheme unless it gave security to religious men of all parties that religion should not be excluded wholly from these institutions—and unless public liberty should be protected from the corrupt influences of such extensive Government patronage. Whilst therefore no practical difference now arises between us and the separate educationists, we are, in my opinion, bound to sustain them in their opposition on those grounds on which we have ourselves (whether wisely or not is not now the question) proclaimed our opposition to the measure."

Davis wrote to Lane with a completer unreserve than to O'Brien. At the outset he said:—

"Should the Catholic bishops go strongly against mixed education, or should Government persist in claiming the nomination and dismissal of the professors, the plan must fail. The latter danger is the greater, as, by what

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[1] Cahermoyle Correspondence, June 26th.

I hear, the best of the bishops are with us. Should the plan be freed from Government despotism, and be carried out, we shall have first a home provision for a literary and scientific class; second, security for educated middle and upper classes in four or five years; third, we shall have got over the last subject, short of fighting, which could break up the party. Our after course will have only front foes, and I don't care for them."

Referring to Lane's complaint that he had been too brusque in his manner of resisting opposition in Committee, he—in the language of pleading—"confessed and avoided":—

"In Committee (which I find more powerful than you suppose) J. O'C. has been severely lectured by O'Brien and reproved by all the Catholic bar. In truth, Clements, O'Dowd, Costello, Drs Nagle and Murphy, are the only supporters of separate education among us now, for Browne is 'on mission,' and Conway is below par. What you say of my general manner is, I fear, quite true. I lose patience with the lying, ignorant, and lazy clan who surround O'C. Indeed I have to maintain a perpetual struggle to prevent myself from quitting politics in absolute scorn; but my heart melts when I think it possible for a union of brave, patient men to lift up the country, in more ways than politics. But till the 'scene' in Conciliation Hall, O'C. and I were most courteous in manner to each other, though frequently opposed in opinion. By the way, O'C. is not sincere for separate education. In the absence of the O'C.s last autumn, O'Neil Daunt and I prepared, by order of the Committee, resolutions positively for mixed education. They were passed unanimously by both Committees—O'Brien in the chair. On Johnny's first appearance in the Committee they were read to him, and he gave them a flat negative, saying he wished Roman Catholic education to be under the Jesuits. In half an hour afterwards, O'Connell came in, heard them, and said, 'I have been for years and still am an advocate for mixed education.' He then went on to say that it would be right to consult the bishops. In a few days after he recanted this opinion, under (we have no doubt) Johnny's influence. I never intended to notice the attack in the *Pilot*, though it and the *Newry Examiner* (edited by Conway) keep constantly at me and the *Nation*. The regard for O'B. is all assumed, as I could prove to you. He was within an ace of leaving the Hall on Monday during Johnny's speech."

Meantime the two parties to the controversy were busy, through the Press and public meetings, promoting their respective views in a legitimate manner. The Archbishop of Tuam, in a letter to Sir Robert Peel, utterly condemned the bill. On the other side a petition was prepared in Dublin, and signed by the most conspicuous citizens outside the Tory party, giving it a conditional support. The petitioners admitted that the proposal to educate students of different creeds together, and to leave open the honours and emoluments to persons of all religious denominations, would tend to promote charity and extinguish religious feuds in Ireland. But the measure was defective in not providing religious instruction for youth removed from the care of their parents,

and in giving the selection and control of the professors to the Crown.[1] Among the petitioners were the Young Irelanders who were already committed to the principles it advocated, and a few professional men who afterwards became officers of the colleges, and may possibly have had an interested motive even at this stage. But they included others whose names furnished significant evidence that the feeling in favour of the measure among the educated class was deep and general. In the final disruption of the Association, a year later, the barristers who took part with O'Connell were James O'Hea, Francis Brady, Robert Mullin, Robert Ferguson, Joseph Henry Dunne, and William Gernon, and all these were among the petitioners. So likewise were two other barristers, afterwards selected by the Catholic bishops to be professors of the Catholic University, John O'Hagan and D. F. M'Carthy; and a considerable number of Catholic gentlemen who were subsequently chosen to represent Catholic constituencies in Parliament, among whom were Thomas O'Hagan, Horace Fitzgerald, Robert Potter, W. H. Cogan, Denis Caulfield Heron, Sir Colman O'Loghlen, Sir Dominic Corrigan, and Sir Timothy O'Brien.

The question for which O'Connell was contending was not separate education; that point he was still willing to yield. In a private note to the Archbishop of Tuam early in the contest he said: "It is possible, though not very probable, that the appointment of professors to instruct the Catholic youth may be given to the Catholic prelates, and in that case, though the principle of exclusive Catholic education may not apply, yet I should think there would be no objection to Protestants attending the classes if all the professors were nominated by the canonical authorities of the Catholic Church."[2] Before leaving for the House of Commons he advised the same prelate, who was the leader of the party of resistance among the bishops, to yield nothing of their demands.[3] "If the prelates take and continue a high, firm, and unani-

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[1] For petition and signatures see *Nation*, June 14th. Regarding this petition, Davis wrote to Lane: "I am glad you like my petition. If anything could change my mixed feeling of admiration and censure of O'Connell into genuine hostility, it would be the vicious adulation and lying incentives proffered to him by the little, stupid, mercenary devils about him, and his patronage of the vilest and weakest of them. They are trying to drive O'Brien, myself, and others to Secession, hoping to have the uncensured handling of public money with their gluey claws; but they shall be disappointed and beaten. . . . You would like Dublin much better than when last here."—Davis to Lane.

[2] Private letter to Dr MacHale, dated 19th Feb. '45, published in Miss Cusack's "Life of the Liberator."

[3] Published in Miss Cusack's "Life of the Liberator." The letter was dated 21st June '45.

mous tone," he said, "the ministry will yield. Believe me, they are ready to yield; you have everything in your own power." That a politician who had long taught his countrymen that Parliament would yield nothing to Irish claims, should have given such counsel would be marvellous, if we did not know that his great intellect was paralysed, and that to hinder the Tories and help the Whigs had been his policy for a decade. The result of his counsel was that no arrangement was arrived at. The bishops had a second meeting, when a new petition was prepared but rejected, and they separated without coming to any decision. The Government made several concessions, and refused several. With respect to the nomination of professors, the State must appoint in the first instance that the proportion among the Churches might be fairly regulated, but they were willing to provide that after an experiment of three years Parliament should review the system and adopt any preferable one. To protect the morals of students, the lodging-houses would receive licenses annually from the visitors, which might be revoked by the same authority. The Board of Works would be empowered to lend money for the purpose of erecting halls where the students might receive religious instruction according to the tenets of their Church, and the principals of those halls would be appointed by the visitors. A salary would not be granted to those officers, as religious endowment was contrary to the principles of the bill, but the Government were persuaded that wealthy Catholics and Protestants would contribute the necessary salary. In selecting the visitors, the heads of the religious bodies in the districts where the college was placed would be included.

After a week's attendance in Parliament O'Connell and Mr John O'Connell returned to Ireland and announced that they had failed to effect any amendment, and that the bill was hopelessly bad. It passed into law, however, and the Catholic Primate announced his intention of giving it a fair trial,[1] and the Bishops in Cork, Galway, and Belfast, where the new colleges were placed, took the same course. A little later, when a change of Government took place, the new administration consulted Dr Crolly and Dr Murray, and attended scrupulously, it is affirmed, to every suggestion they made for securing the religious instruction and moral conduct of the Catholic students.[2] They were prepared to revise the statutes of the colleges on the same instigation. But the majority of the bishops held aloof, and in time they all with-

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[1] Public Meeting at Armagh.
[2] Lord Dalling's "Life of Lord Palmerston."

drew their support under instructions from the Propaganda. The result has been that during two generations a section of the Catholic youth have been educated in a system disapproved of by their religious superiors; another section have been educated in Trinity College, a purely Protestant foundation; and a large section have been entirely deprived of collegiate training, a calamity perhaps as disastrous as the famine. It is hard to estimate the suffering and humiliation which have attended the generations since launched into life without requisite discipline. Our ancestors fought with their naked breasts against Norman knights locked in iron, and it is at such odds Ireland still sends her young men to fight the battle of life. Among the friends of the measure it may be that some fixed their eyes too exclusively on the gain of rearing students in friendly intercourse, and too little on the danger to faith. But others fixed their eyes too exclusively on victory, and too little on the sacrifice at which it was to be purchased. I have since lived nearly a quarter of a century in a new country, where young men flock in quest of fortune, and I have seen troops of bright, intelligent young Irishmen forfeit great opportunities, and fall into inferior positions, because their education had been unpractical and defective. And it was impossible to believe that this calamity might not have been averted, when I saw in that country two universities having none of the provisions on which O'Connell insisted, where the students attend classes together and live where they think fit, without ecclesiastical or academic supervision, where there are no separate professors and no separate class of studies, and where on the council of each university there was a Catholic Archbishop. A fairer and better system than the one accepted in Australia might assuredly have been obtained in Ireland in 1845.

Peel's third measure was still more unfortunate than the second. It was spoiled by the advice of his Irish supporters; so hopeless is it to effect good through agents to whom the right is odious. Lord Stanley proposed a Land Bill which remedied none of the serious evils the Commission had disclosed. It did not recognise in any manner the costly improvements which the tenantry had already created, and it proposed to grant compensation in the future merely for drains and farm buildings; and this compensation was to be claimable only in case of ejectment. By inference it abolished the Tenant Right of the North. Davis prepared a report on the scheme, and strongly advised O'Connell and O'Brien to take up the interest of the northern farmers, and thereby

gain their goodwill and finally their co-operation. But before anything was undertaken, the measure, which was received with a shout of disapprobation North and South, was withdrawn. Lord Stanley had not succeeded in legislating on the question; but it is probable that he obtained an insight into the unjust and untenable character of the land system in Ireland, for in after years, when he succeeded to the management of the family property, he solved the difficulty for himself by selling his Irish estates.

At this period Davis proposed, for the first time, to go circuit, and the news was not received by his friends with unanimous assent. Dillon wrote to me:—

"If Davis will not attend two public dinners, I would much rather he would select Sligo than Galway. Tell him I will write to him from Sligo, and as I would say the same things to both of you, that letter will do for you, and you can show him this. I was greatly annoyed at hearing a report that he was going circuit. That, I think, would be altogether ruinous. Everyone would say that he was driven out of politics. I have been thinking that he and you ought to start a penny magazine,[1] and conduct it yourselves, making use of James Duffy to circulate it. If you would join in the speculation I am certain it should necessarily succeed, and it would be a powerful engine. 'It stands upon you' to work against the powerful confederacy that has been formed to crush you, and in your persons everything that is upright and independent in the country. May God defend the right."

On the other hand, Denny Lane approved of the design:—

"I am very glad," he wrote to Davis, "to hear that you are coming down to the Assizes. The going circuit I think more than anything else can make a man acquainted with the provincial mind of Ireland, which is really of much greater proportionate power than the ex-metropolitan mind of any other country. In fact we have no metropolis—neither the court of claret-coloured coats nor that of wigs and gowns is enough to make Dublin anything but a country town. We have no theatre, no periodical literature, no gathering of artists, no great merchants, above all no legislative assembly collecting into a focus every ray of intellect and enterprise in the country. In fact we have nothing of what makes Paris or other capitals the 'governor' of the great engine of a nation."

During the Colleges controversy a project of earlier date was carried out. The State prisoners held a levee in the Rotunda on the anniversary of their imprisonment. In the historic Round-Room, festive with flags and decorations, O'Connell and his late fellow-prisoners, standing on an elevated daïs and surrounded by the *élite* of the national party, received the felicitations of an organised nation. Deputations from the

[1] This project of Dillon's, to supplement a costly weekly paper by a penny sheet for the multitude, has since been successfully adopted in Ireland.

great municipalities, from the commissioners and guardians of the lesser towns, from the associated trades, and from the clergy and laity of numerous districts, were presented, thanking them for their past fidelity, and promising to co-operate with them to the end in the struggle for nationality. A pledge proposed by Smith O'Brien and seconded by Henry Grattan was adopted, declaring that the men there assembled (who were in effect a National Convention) would never cease seeking the Repeal of the Union by all peaceful, moral, and constitutional agences till a native Parliament was restored.[1]

But Ireland by this time had had demonstrations and *pronunciamentos* enough and to spare. Perhaps indeed she "protested too much," and became liable to the suspicion which the same exuberance of sentiment suggested in the case of the tragedy queen.

One good result, however, the Levee produced; the best men of the National party scattered throughout the four provinces were brought together for a moment in the capital. They had witnessed O'Connell's assault upon Davis with feelings akin to the despair of the Dutch Protestants when Maurice of Orange, the sword of the Reformation, struck at John of Barnvelt, its brain. They desired to negotiate a permanent peace, and were profuse in good advice to both parties. But they probably took too little account of one agent, without whom peace was now impossible—Mr John O'Connell.[2]

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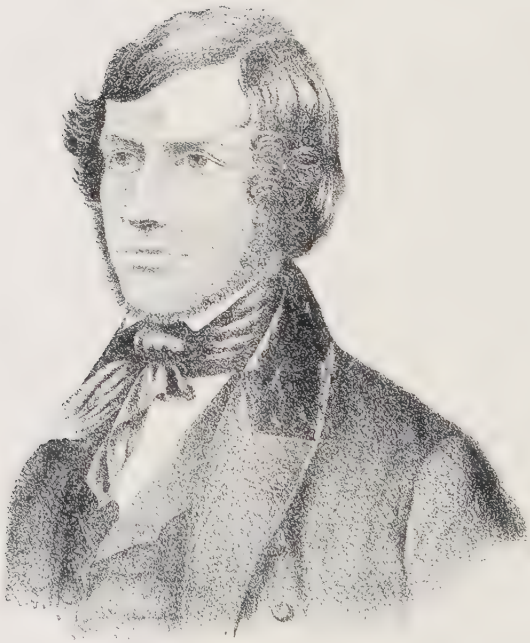
[1] "The meeting on Friday was all *our* press describes it—by far the greatest popular display I ever witnessed under and outside the Rotunda. O'C. interrupted me on Monday week to confuse me, but he only roused and served me. I was famously heard, and we are great political friends now."—Davis to Maddyn.

[2] The literary projects were pressed on without regard to the controversies in the Association. MacNevin wrote to Lane:—"The country is bristling with books on all sides, Protestant, Orange, mitigated purple, bright green, dark green, and invisible green. We are all writing books, such as they are, and all about the 'dear little isle.' Now, if wealth and national learning go on together, the devil cannot arrest the progress of our cause; for I observed in reading our history that at every period when fair play was given for a moment to the national mind, it rushed to freedom with a noble instinct."



1847.

John Mitchel

CHAPTER IX.

THE VICE-TRIBUNATE OF JOHN O'CONNELL.

When the Bill passed autumn had arrived, and in autumn it was as hopeless to keep the national leaders in Dublin as to keep the House of Commons in session. O'Connell retired to Darrynane, O'Brien to Cahermoyle, and their principal associates set out for the Rhine or Mont Blanc, or on political expeditions beyond the Bann or the Shannon. Davis had volunteered to allow me a holiday, by taking my place in the *Nation* office, and my holiday was employed in an excursion through Ulster, from Rostrevor to Donegal. An Orange meeting on a scale of unusual magnitude was projected at Enniskillen to impeach Peel for his desertion of Protestant ascendancy; and in company with two or three friends I resolved to see this muster of faithful Protestants. My companions were John O'Hagan and two provincial adherents of the Young Ireland Party who now first come distinctly into view. During a residence in Belfast from 1839 to 1842, I had made the acquaintance of John Mitchel, a solicitor residing at Banbridge, who impressed me by the vigour and liberality of his opinions, as well as by his culture and suavity. He was the son of a Unitarian Minister, had been educated at Trinity College, and at this time was under thirty years of age. He was rather above the middle size, well made, and with a face which was thoughtful and comely, though pensive blue eyes and masses of soft brown hair, a stray ringlet of which he had the habit of twining round his finger while he spoke, gave it, perhaps, too feminine a cast. He lived much alone, and this training had left the ordinary results; he was silent and retiring, slow to speak and apt to deliver his opinion in a form which would be abrupt and dogmatic if it were not relieved by a pleasant smile. He was already happily married, and lived contentedly among his books, in a little village on the pastoral Bann, without one associate of his own sex for his mind or heart. During his rare visits to Dublin I introduced

him to Davis, with whom he was much taken, and though he had not yet given us any effectual assistance as a writer or speaker, he was reckoned by the young men as one of their reserve. We had shown our estimate of him by placing him on the Council of the Eighty-two Club, and by inviting him to contribute a volume to the Library of Ireland, which after some hesitation he undertook.[1]

It was with Mitchel I had originally planned this expedition, and as the time approached he announced himself ready. In the middle of July he wrote from Banbridge:—

"Did I not predict truly of the July weather? [It was raining cats and dogs.] Surely we shall have a glorious August for this. The assizes and all other attorney work will be at an end (or suspended) before the 1st August. So that if you and O'Hagan fix any day about then, and let me know a day or two before, I will meet you in Newry, then we will see Rostrevor, and on our way to Banbridge batter and reduce Loughorn but spare the garrison [Loughorn was the residence of Mr John Martin, one of the proposed tourists] and so on to Belfast: or else in a north-west direction, as may be decided in solemn council of war, to be held in Banbridge, over a map of Ireland.

"Will none of the rest—Dillon, Barry, MacNevin—be persuaded to join us, even for a part of the time? About the books [the Library of Ireland, of which the first volume had just appeared] Mr Davis writes to me that he will not have his 'Tone' ready as the advertisement promises, and I have been making some exertion to have 'Aodh O'Neill' finished soon, to put in its place—I fear a sorry substitute. Still if yours [the 'Ballad Poetry of Ireland'] and Mr Carleton's 'Rody' are really to be published as announced, I should have time enough, and moreover I should have (which I much desire) your advice upon some passages that Davis rather takes exception to—I should hardly say that, but desires me to reconsider—and those very passages I am unwilling to alter seeing they are as I conceive justified, both historically and otherwise. It is a delicate period that I have fallen upon; and one upon which *conciliatory* writing is difficult. Besides, I confess that I am

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[1] Mitchel had written one review for the *Nation* (a notice of a pamphlet on the estates of the London Societies in Ulster, by his uncle Mr Haslet, Mayor of Derry), one letter of no significance, one leading article (Convicted Conspirators, March 2nd, '44), and half another. The latter appeared in No. 33 (May 27th '44), and is entitled "The Anti-Irish Catholics" (Lord Beaumont, etc). The first portion was Davis's; it is Mitchel's from the following sentence to the end; a sentence interesting as marking his opinions at that period. Davis republished in the "Voice of the Nation" his own portion of the article, omitting the remainder:—"In the year 1843 the native country of that servile lord is still a province, but making a noble struggle for its independence; violating no human, no divine law; forming no dark, secret associations, but working by the peaceful might of concentrated opinion alone; collecting in the open day the suffrages of her unarmed and sober millions, under the sanction of religion, and the guidance of religion's anointed ministers, until every Irishman shall have pronounced his opinion whether his country shall be once more a nation or not." The articles in the "Voice of the Nation" signed M——, which have sometimes been attributed by critics to Mitchel, were written by John Fisher Murray.

1848.

John Martin

inclined to ultra vehemence in speaking of that time, and really thought I had restrained myself admirably. But you shall see.

"I hope you are in good health and that you will be able for the hills when we start. For Mrs Duffy I am almost afraid to ask.

"Be sure to give me warning before you come that I may have a day or two to put my office in order. I hear you have the 'Battle of Maghrath' [one of the publications of the Archæological Society], and that there is a learned appendix upon Irish Military Standards. Will you lend it to me? Remember to bring it with you."

The excursion began early in August, and its aims and enjoyment were a type of the practical and imaginative characters of the party inspired by Davis. I borrow a brief account of it from a note-book of the period:—

O'H. and I rested at Drogheda, where we fought the battle (of the Boyne) over again, map in hand, then proceeded to Lurgan Green, where a Scotch engineer has conquered a tract from the sea at a cost which makes it feasible to have the same result repeated in many places; thence to inspect the Catholic church of Dundalk [the most successful of the Gothic revivals which had recently begun], and on to Faughart, where tradition declares Edward Bruce lies buried after his disastrous Irish campaign. Next day to the old keep of Narrowwater, over Ferry hill, where the divine bay of Rostrevor—lying between guardian mountains, with Carlingford and Cooley on the right, and on the left Mourne and Warrenpoint—might realise a painter's dream of ideal beauty. Here our northern friends met us and we spent a day at Kilbroney, a valley in the heart of the Mourne mountains, where the bleach-green and beetling mills of Mr Martin's elder brother renewed our acquaintance (we were all Ulstermen bred among flax and linen) with the most successful of Northern industries. Thence to "castle-filled Carlingford" where a mediæval fortress fit to shelter an army sits on a huge rock rising perpendicularly out of the sea, unapproachable, except by the flattest and lightest boats, and still seems to guard, as of old, the "Pass of the North." At Loughorn we made another pause. Mr Martin—the eldest of the party—was a gentleman farmer of unusual culture, but whose gentle manners and feeble health gave little promise of political action. He had been Mitchel's schoolfellow, and his life then and thereafter was undoubtedly ruled by this fact. From Loughorn our course to Bryansford lay through a district which, after seven generations, still bore the character impressed upon it by the Plantation under James I. There were Catholic districts and Protestant districts, Protestant towns and Catholic towns like Rathfriland and Hilltown, and the original population, who had been driven from the rich valleys to the soil which the "plantators" disdained, were still known as the "mountainy men." At Fofaney we found the name of the National School painted in the Irish character, and vowed to have this example followed in the Repeal Reading Rooms. At Bryansford (the residence of Lord Roden), the leader of the Orangemen has made himself a home of matchless beauty, in an ancient seat of the O'Neils, and what is better, established an hotel which was [in those days] a model of comfort and convenience. I can scarcely record without inward laughter and some self-reproach the incidents at Bryansford. You are required to write your name in a book at the lodge before entering Lord Roden's domain, and two of the travellers,

against the plaintive remonstrance of their comrades, insisted upon entering themselves as Aodh O'Neil of Tyreoghen, and Roger O'More of Leix, two historic names malign to the house of Jocelyn. When we returned to an excellent dinner we found on every toilet table a Protestant Bible conspicuously displayed. [Lord Roden was one of the modern saints.] One of us called attention to the fact, and vowed he would not let Lord Roden thrust his Bible upon him till he asked for it. "Certainly not," said Mitchel; "I'll ring the bell and order the waiter to carry them off forthwith." Martin, who acted as general peacemaker, insisted that the Bibles were doing us no hurt, that we were not forced to read them, that Lord Roden meant well, and so forth, which produced small results, till at length he urged a final motion in arrest of judgment. "Well, for my part," he said, "I want to read a chapter before I go to sleep." The idea of a Bible on every toilet table of four being necessary to enable our friend to read his chapter was so irresistible, that we broke into a chorus of laughter, and compromised the case by piling all the Bibles on Martin's table for his personal comfort.

From Bryansford we went to Newcastle, and ascended Slievedonard. As we mounted a mist came plump down, through which we could not see three yards, but we toiled on towards the summit. After a little the mist drifted away almost as rapidly as the lifting of a curtain, and disclosed a scene which none of us will ever forget. The whole Mourne chain lay beneath us, and out of the valleys the mist was steaming up as from huge cauldrons. The sea was a dazzling spectacle; a shower of rain turned a stretch of the bay from deep blue to jet black, while nearer the shore it became emerald green, and the harbour of Dundrum seemed to rise silver white out of the brown plains, to meet the changing sky. Through the breaks of the mountain we could discern in the distance the lough of Carlingford and the bay of Dundalk. The mists as they rose flew about the mountain, now chasing each other round its base, now hooding its head in darkness. During the entire period of our slow descent it was raining in some part of the vast plain exposed to our view, and the contest between the sun and the storm looked like a pitched battle of pagan gods. A vast army of clouds would take possession of a town, and pour a fierce storm of rain upon it; suddenly the sun would be seen advancing in its rear and driving it to sea. Presently the rain would rally round some hill-top, and the clouds flocked to this new *rendezvous*, leaving the former battlefield in possession of the enemy. Again, when the sun would seem to be in complete command of a town, a reinforcement of heavy clouds would rush round a mountain spur and beat back the sunshine. We watched the conflict with constant interest, though occasionally flying parties of the storm took us in flank and galled us considerably.

We pursued our journey by way of Dundrum, where John de Courcy erected one of the castles through which that great Norman soldier held his grasp on the North, and made our way to Downpatrick, where Thomas Russell, the friend of Wolfe Tone and the ally of Robert Emmet, lies buried in the parish church; and where an unprotected sod, which the piety of pilgrims constantly diminishes, is shown as the grave of St Patrick. The day ordinarily finished with refreshment for mind and body which we fell into the habit of distinguishing as 'Tea and Thomas'—Thomas being the philosopher of Chelsea [whom we all loved for having taught so well to scorn pretence and hold by truth and duty, without sharing one in twenty of his opinions on men or events]. While we were sipping the social beverage, and listening to 'Sartor Resartus' read aloud by one of us, in an inn in

Downpatrick one evening, a dapper little Cockney commercial traveller in stress of accommodation was shown into our sitting-room, and served with brandy and water at a table apart. After listening in mute amazement for a quarter of an hour he could stand it no longer. "Forgive me, gentlemen," he said, "for interrupting you, but you don't mean to say that all that blessed nonsense is printed in that book." When he was assured that it was so set down in the record, he requested to be told the name of the author. "Carlyle!" he said, "Ah! I am not surprised at that fellow. I often saw his shop in Fleet Street with the devil in one window and a bishop in the other." Some of us intimated that his Carlile and the author of "Sartor Resartus" were not identical, any more than the Solomon who had recently been convicted as a "fence" was identical with the personage of the same name who built the Temple of Jerusalem; but it was in vain. "Ah," he repeated, "I saw his shop in Fleet Street with my own eyes, and there was a bishop in one window and the devil in the other."

From Downpatrick we went to Ballynahinch, where in '98 the United Irishmen, Presbyterian and Catholic, fought against the English troops for six hours; a man named Innes, who had carried a pike that day, was still living and showed us the battlefield. Thence along the river, whose low hills were covered with white and brown linen, to Banbridge, where Mitchel resided. Next morning two of us went to mass in the village chapel, and saw a scene singularly solemn and impressive. A venerable old man, whose head I thought I would recognise as the head of a Christian bishop if I met it in an African desert,[1] was receiving a public offender back into the Church. He questioned him as to the sincerity of his repentance, then prayed over him, and exhorted the congregation, in language wonderfully impressive, to be charitable to their erring brother, as they too might fall. From Banbridge we passed through the pleasant orchards and farmyards of Armagh, to the ecclesiastical capital where the Protestant Primate had spent thirty thousand pounds to re-edify the ancient cathedral, and the Catholic Primate was engaged in planning a new cathedral which it was said would throw it into the shade; and on to Enniskillen, where the Orangmen were to bring Peel to judgment for his backsliding.

But the pleasure of the day was turned into gloom whenever we fell in with the Dublin newspapers. In the absence of the legitimate leaders, Mr John O'Connell was in undisputed control of the Association, and was deliberately destroying the labour of years, and the hopes of a generation. He played the part of dictator at that time with a dogmatism which his great father after a life of public services rarely assumed. At every meeting the chair, which used to be an object of honest ambition, was occupied by some of his private retinue; and at every meeting there was some personal conflict or some gross violation of the neutrality on which the Association rested. One day a respectable solicitor who had been engaged in the great Clare Election of 1829, and constantly afterwards in public affairs, was asked "how dare he come there" to controvert an opinion of Mr John O'Connell's on the question of negro

[1] Right Rev. Dr Blake of Dromore.

slavery.[1] Another day was occupied with an angry contest over the private affairs of the Dublin Corporation. The comments of the English press on the Holy See, the proceedings of a body of dissenters who called themselves the German Catholic Church, were in turn debated at great length. But the climax was reached when he occupied the Association for half an hour with a denunciation of a Whig newspaper for having referred disrespectfully "to an adorable relic, an unseamed garment exhibited at Treves, supposed to have been worn by the blessed Redeemer during His Passion"—the authenticity of which, however, was not a fundamental principle of the Repeal Association. His first escapade came to hand as we sat down at Mitchel's table for the first time, and for some of us dinner was at an end. Each week brought new troubles, and though youth is not easily depressed, for a day after the receipt of fresh bulletins of ruin the sunshine and beauty seemed to vanish from the noble scenery in which we were travelling, and from life itself. The correspondence which these disastrous proceedings produced among our comrades went to the *Nation* office; but a note from MacNevin followed me to the north. "John O'Connell," he said, "is the most mischievous public man in Ireland. The Association is now merely a Catholic Association. Repeal or any high or honourable principle of nationality is never heard there. . . . Look at the corporation. Is that the spirit of municipal freedom? Oh, Brussels, Bruges, Ghent, and Anvers!" It was needless to add, what his correspondent would know, was implied in the fact that to turn the Repeal Association into a Catholic Association was to break faith with the Protestant members, and to forbid the hope of recruiting to its ranks independent men of any section. The sentiment of nationality was beyond Mr John O'Connell's power, but the instrument by which nationality might triumph was being blunted and broken.

The Enniskillen meeting proved an impressive and significant phenomenon. There was a muster of twenty thousand men, making no account of women, children, and stragglers. Elsewhere in Ulster the Orangemen were commonly servants, shop boys, and the class generally without discipline or influence; here they consisted in a great part of the solid middle-aged farmers of Fermanagh and Tyrone, led by the smaller gentry. Large in person, stern in feature, erect in carriage, they

[1] Mr Richard Scott of Ennis. Mr Scott observed that he condemned slavery as much as any one, but there was an Anti-Slavery Society which met at the Royal Exchange, and he considered that platform, not Conciliation Hall, the proper place for denouncing it. The present time, when there was a cloud in the west, was not a fit one for gratuitous interference in American affairs.

Quebec, 1861.

Yours affectionately
Thos Darcy McGee.

were the manifest heirs of the planters and Puritans, and as they filed over the northern bridge the tourists agreed that they had never seen a body of undisciplined men so military in their bearing and movements. The gay genial air and elastic step of the men who mustered at Tara and Mullaghmast were replaced by a serious and even gloomy demeanour, but we recognised the serviceable qualities it covered, and eagerly desired to see this solid force added to the national strength, and serving Ireland in its own fashion. The faces of the men did not promise too ready a reception for new opinions, and the tone of their spokesmen furnished even less ground of hope. The speeches were painfully driftless; mere idle rant or brute bellowing. The mass writhed with pain and fear of change, but there was no intelligible voice to express either their hopes or their fears. "It ended in a roar; it might have ended in a revolution."

From Enniskillen we turned to Donegal to revel in the grand ocean-beaten scenery of the north-western coast. As we arrived after a long day's travel at Donegal, the little town where the pious labours of the Four Masters preserved the early annals of Ireland, I found a letter announcing alarming news from my home. It was necessary to separate from my companions on the instant, and travel back the same route through the night. When I reached home, happily all immediate danger was declared to be over.

Davis urged me to rejoin the northern tourists and complete my holiday, under penalty of being unfit for the work of the coming winter. This was not to be thought of, but as a compromise I agreed to spend some days in Wicklow, within a few hours' drive of Dublin. A week before I started on the northern tour Wilson Gray had introduced a young Irish-American to me, whom the proprietors of the *Freeman's Journal* had brought home from Boston, to become one of their contributors. The young man was not prepossessing. He had a face of almost African type, his dress was slovenly even for the careless class to which he belonged, he looked unformed, and had a manner which struck me at first sight as too deferential for self-respect. But he had not spoken three sentences in a singularly sweet and flexible voice till it was plain that he was a man of fertile brains and great originality; a man in whom one might dimly discover rudiments of the orator, poet and statesman, hidden under this ungainly disguise. This was Thomas D'Arcy M'Gee. I invited him to breakfast on some early day at his convenience, and as he arrived one morning when I was engaged to breakfast with Davis I took him with me, and he met, for the first and

last time, a man destined to largely influence his life. When the Wicklow trip was projected I told Davis I liked this new-comer, and meant to invite him to accompany me. "Well," he said, "your new friend has an Irish nature certainly, but spoiled, I fear, by the Yankees. He has read and thought a good deal, and I might have liked him better if he had not so obviously determined to *transact* an acquaintance with me."

During the run in Wicklow a letter from the northern tourists reached me which will complete the record of that pleasant time.

"We have had a most delightful tour through Donegal" (Mitchel wrote), "and only arrived here yesterday, but we missed you sadly. On Sleive League, at Dunlewy, at Horn Head, and wherever the earth and the heavens were grandest, we thought with regret that you should have been turned back from the very threshold of such glorious scenery, and by so melancholy a cause; but we shall meet again in Donegal, and end the tour another day. O'H.'s journal ought to be good, for he spends a good deal of time writing it. He has turned out a capital mountaineer, and will tell you of strange passages that he and I have gone through amongst the hills; how we walked five-and-twenty miles through woods and morasses one day, and were at last benighted about fifteen miles from any shelter, in the midst of a pathless wood, that stands now as wild and shaggy and savage as it was a thousand years ago: how we struggled on all night, having fortunately moonlight, and not liking to lie down to sleep in the wood, inasmuch as we were wet to the bones: how towards morning we reached the hotel, weary, wet and famished with hunger, etc. In short, I have good hopes of making a tourist of him yet—if he survive my instructions. Poor Martin has had a good deal of illness, but he has pushed on gallantly. However, he was not out with us in the night adventure.

"I am hurrying home and intend to be in Banbridge on Tuesday, when I will work hard till I finish 'Aodh' [his volume for the Library of Ireland], and will carefully refer to my Index Expurgatorius of Carlylish phrases [to which his correspondent and another of the tourists had taken exception]. We got the *Nation* yesterday, and simultaneously asked each other which of *us* was the enthusiastic gentleman referred to in 'Answers to Correspondents' who requires his letters to be addressed to the Merman of the Rosses and roaring Meg. We approve highly all of us of our correspondent's account of the Enniskillen meeting, and *disapprove* of giving so much good language to the treacherous *Evening Mail!*"[1]

The MS. of "Aodh O'Neil" followed speedily, and in reply to some further objections to Carlyleisms which had escaped his promised revision, Mitchel wrote a fortnight later[2]:—

"Now as to the Carlylean phrases you mention; the printer might omit the last clause of that paragraph beginning 'Though in a mercantile point of view, etc.'—it is unnecessary, though I think *not* Carlylean. 'The Good Heavens for what service?' *has* a tinge of Thomas. It might stand thus 'for some unknown service.' It is hard of you to cut down my fine writing!"

[1] Londonderry, Aug. 22nd, '45, Mitchel to Duffy.
[2] Mitchel to Duffy, Banbridge, Sept. 7th.

CHAPTER X.

THE DEATH OF DAVIS.

After a week's absence I returned home at the beginning of September, relieved Davis from duty, and urged him to start immediately on his autumn tour. But he was correcting a new edition of his "Curran" at the moment, and would not consent to go till it was finished, or before the time originally fixed for the close of my holiday, and the beginning of his—a date still two or three weeks distant.

The condition of the national cause, when I resumed my place, was one to justify discouragement and even dismay. Wherever the eye turned one discerned disasters or reverses, grave mistakes committed, or great opportunities thrown away. Among our most notable successes in 1843 might be counted the sympathy awakened in France and America; but at this time France and America were sullen or exasperated. Frenchmen had been wounded by O'Connell's gratuitous declaration that he would rather abandon Repeal than owe it to France; and America had received a more wanton and intolerable provocation. Peel's concessions were referable to his apprehension of a war between England and the United States, and by bringing the English minister into such a temper the United States had proved a most serviceable ally to Ireland. To knit closer a friendship which had proved so useful was the plain duty of the Irish leaders; but instead of taking this course O'Connell declared that the Irish people, on certain conditions, were ready to turn on their ally and smite him into the dust. They would help England to "pluck down the American eagle in its highest pride of flight."[1] This maladroit declaration was received with dismay in Ireland, and with mingled rage and derision in America.

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[1] "We tell them from this spot that they can have us—that the throne of Victoria can be made perfectly secure—the Honour of the British empire maintained—and the American eagle in its highest pride of flight be brought down. Let them conciliate and do us justice, and they will have us enlisted under the banner of Victoria—let them but give us the Parliament in College Green, and Oregon shall be theirs and Texas shall be harmless."—Speech of O'Connell at the Repeal Association, April 4th, 1845.

"Everybody," Dillon wrote to Davis, "is indignant at O'Connell meddling in the business. His talk about bringing down the pride of the American eagle, if England would pay us sufficiently, is not merely foolish, but false and base. Such talk must be supremely disgusting to the Americans, and to every man of honour and spirit. He lectures the *Spectator* for saying that the loyalty of the Irish may be secured for a 'consideration,' and he says the same himself the next moment. The plain policy of the party now is to assume a menacing attitude: for either there will be a war, or England will be obliged to shrink."

In America the natural rage of the native press and the native party was largely shared by Irish Americans. The Repeal Associations in Baltimore, New Orleans, and other populous and important districts, were dissolved, and all further connection with Conciliation Hall repudiated. The few Associations which remained in existence did not attempt to justify O'Connell's language, but pleaded the paramount claims of the mother country. Whatever blunders leaders might commit, the Irish exile must be true to the Irish cause. At home mismanagement produced even more disastrous results than abroad. The Federal movement, the proposals of the Whig peers, the project of a Rotatory Parliament, but beyond all these, the temper and language of the Tory gentry, and their representatives in the press, had disclosed a condition of mind singularly favourable to a formidable national union. O'Brien, who was slow to predict pleasant things, assured Davis that such a union was no longer impossible, if only the Repeal party did not throw away their chance.

"From many circumstances which came to my knowledge whilst I was in London," he wrote, "but which I do not feel myself at liberty to particularise, I am induced to think that the period of such an union is much nearer than our fondest hopes could lead us to believe—that is, if we do not spoil our own game. This I am afraid that we do at each moment, when there is the best ground for hope."

It was effectually spoiled by Conciliation Hall being made, week after week, more and more odious to the men who were gravitating towards the national cause. With a great league authentically representing the bulk of the Irish people, having Catholics and Protestants standing shoulder to shoulder in its foremost ranks, a league treated with confidence and deference in Paris and Washington, the gentry might perhaps negotiate: but with a sectarian society, where Mr John O'Connell harangued on negro slavery, German Catholics and the Holy Coat of Treves, and which nations the most friendly to Ireland repudiated with scorn, negotiation was impossible. The sweet temper and forbear-

ing nature of John Dillon were so embittered by John O'Connell's presumption that he counselled immediate resistance, in language from which his habitual moderation almost entirely disappeared.

"I have just read," he wrote to Davis, "with inexpressible disgust the speech of John O'Connell, and the scene which followed between himself and [Richard] Scott. It behoves you to consider very seriously whether the *Nation* is not bound to notice this matter. I feel very desirous that you personally should avoid any further encounter with the O'Connells for some time. . . . In truth, from the turn matters are now taking, a decent man cannot frequent the public meetings; for he must either create dissension or have his reputation damaged by silently listening to the absurd and mischievous stuff that is talked there. But I doubt much whether a newspaper can, without compromising its character, allow these proceedings to pass unnoticed. My notion is that Scott has a right to protection, and that the public will, or ought to, feel indignant if this protection be withheld. The *Nation* could not possibly get a better opportunity of reading a long-required lecture to Johnny. The immediate topic is one on which public opinion is universally against him." . . . [Scott was an old man long associated with O'Connell, who, having no relations with the Young Irelanders, made a slight effort to pacify America by excluding from Conciliation Hall negro slavery, Texas, Oregon, and the whole range of transatlantic questions upon which O'Connell and Mr John O'Connell had been haranguing.] "Can anything be more evident than the puerile folly of it? When the Americans were engaged in their own struggle, only fancy one of their orators coming down to the Congress with a violent invective against the abuses of the French Government of the day! Any man who is thoroughly in earnest about one thing cannot allow his mind to wander in pursuit of things not merely unconnected but inconsistent with that thing. It is impossible latterly to bear with the insolence of this little frog. There is no man or country safe from his venom. If there be not some protest against him, he will set the whole world against us."[1]

MacNevin was also deeply discontented and disquieted; but his vehement nature was moved rather to the scorn that rejects further responsibility than to the zeal that sets to work to amend what is wrong.

"Dillon wrote me a letter, and he is sick of the abomination of desolation on Burgh Quay. It never opens its sooty mouth on the subject of Repeal now. By the way, where *is* the Repeal agitation; is it hunting at Darrynane? . . . My parliamentary mania is cured; I would not accept the representation of any constituency at the beck of such a body. I will work with you and Davis, but no more with that base *mélange* of tyranny and mendicancy. I am glad that Davis does not go to the Association; I shall not go when I return."[2]

This danger to the public cause was supplemented, as I speedily

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[1] Davis Papers. Dillon to Davis. Ballina, August 6, 1845.
[2] MacNevin to Duffy. Rose Park, September 15, 1845.

discovered, by danger to the party and the journal for which I had a more immediate responsibility. Mr John O'Connell—so friends whom we could altogether trust assured us—had been as busy in undermining the *Nation* as in disorganising Conciliation Hall. Doheny reported to Davis from Tipperary that a journal which a few weeks before was a synonym for public spirit and public confidence had now many enemies.

"It [the *Nation*] is in great disrepute among the priests. I met a doctor at Nenagh who lost two subscribers to a dispensary for refusing to give it up. . . . I was thinking of writing an article on the subject. If you and Duffy don't approve of it when you see it, it can be left out. O'Connell's *hints* are taken to be corroborative of the ruffianism of others."

The *modus operandi*, it seems, was to attribute to the Young Irelanders opinions and designs which, says Doheny, are as authentic "as if the *Nation* were described as a monster with an adder's sting and the scales of a crocodile." Dillon wrote to me from the West in the same tone:—

"I trust the *Nation* has not suffered materially in circulation by the rascally conspiracy that has been formed against it. It would be a most cheering thing if it pass through this trying ordeal. The scoundrels are betaking themselves to the provincial papers to circulate their calumnies. I perceive the *Sligo Champion* has an article now regularly upon Young Ireland. It is to be attributed to the influence, if not to the pen, of Dillon Browne. I will be in Sligo on Friday. I have met only one priest here who is not an enemy to Young Ireland, always excepting those who know nothing about them. The name of that priest is Coghlan, . . . and his good opinion is worth that of all the rest."

There was plainly much need of a conference of my friends, but there were none of them at hand to consult except Davis; and he was engrossed in long-deferred work of his own.

Early in the second week after my return to the *Nation* office, instead of his usual visit, I got a note. It was a hasty scrawl, written in bed, the lines blurred, and as few as could convey his meaning intelligibly.

"*Tuesday Morning.*

"MY DEAR D.—I have had an attack of some sort of cholera, and *perhaps* have slight scarlatina. I cannot see anyone, and am in bed. Don't be alarmed about me, but don't rely on my being able to write.—Ever yours,
"T. D."

Disease, or deficiency in any sort of strength, seemed so incredible in the case of Davis, that the few friends to whom his illness was necessarily known, because to see and talk with him was part of their daily life, regarded it as of no importance. The complete absence of

Tuesday morng

My dear D/ I have had an attack of some sort of cholera & perhaps have slight scarlatina. I cannot see anyone & am in bed. Don't be alarmed about me but don't rely on my being able to write.

ever yours

D

any suspicion of danger will be best understood by the terms in which the news was announced and received by his comrades. Among MacNevin's correspondence I find this note, which I addressed to him on the same day as Davis's note to me :—

"I sympathise with your desire for a new and an Irish subject. What say you to the 'Plantation of Ulster'? A good title, a good topic, and a useful one. It would begin the day Mitchel's book ends, and end where mine begins [a projected History of the Rising in 1641]. The subject would suit you. It is civil, not military, near enough our own time to need no antiquarian research, and full of strong pictures. If you determine upon this subject I can give you books, pamphlets, and other assistance. . . . Davis is confined to his bed with English cholera; but it is passing away, so do your best for the *Nation* next week."[1]

MacNevin replied by return of post :—

"I am quite delighted at your suggestion about 'the Plantation of Ulster.' It is an excellent subject, the more peculiarly as I shall be an isthmus connecting Mitchel and Duffy. I suppose the materials are abundant, and I am sure you will give me the best assistance; and I shall dedicate the 'Plantation' to the Fishmongers' Company. Is there any way of tracing the names and families of the plunderers who displaced the native Irish, and the names of the latter—I mean as connected with each locality? I consulted O'Brien, strange to say, upon the propriety of writing provincial histories of robbery, beginning with Charles; but he thought it smacked too much of the literature of confiscation. But no objection lies to my new subject. . . . Is it not Davis's book on 'Tone' that comes out next? I am glad he is getting better of his 'English cholera.' Why the d——l did he not get an Irish cholera?—his stomach is too Saxon."[2]

To Davis himself he wrote in the same bantering tone :—

"I regretted very much to hear that you had been unwell, the more especially as your ailment took so unpatriotic a turn as 'English cholera.' The unfortunate disease won't remain long in your Celtic constitution. I suppose you are quite well by this time. . . . Will you write me (and pray do it at once if you are well) a list of places and books to find all about the 'Ulster Plantation' in; as I have, greatly to my pleasure, been awarded that subject by Charles Duffy. It is not too antiquarian; and I am quite sick of modern patriotism. . . . Pray do now write me one line from your couch, where '*Tityre tu recubans sub tegmine—quilti.*'"[3]

After a couple of days Davis wrote again; the handwriting was tremulous and scratchy, but the tone was so tranquil and confident that it was impossible to feel any alarm. Tossing on a bed of fever, his first thought was to provide against the chance of the ill news alarming

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[1] *Nation* Papers. Duffy to MacNevin.
[2] *Nation* Papers. MacNevin to Duffy.
[3] Davis Papers. MacNevin to Davis.

one who was very dear to him, his second that a trivial duty for which he was responsible might not be neglected.

"DEAR D——I have had a bad attack of scarlatina, with a horrid sore throat; don't mention this to *any* one, for a very delicate reason I have; but pray get the Curran speeches read, except the Newry election. Have Conway's *Post* of 1812 sent back to him, and read and correct yourself so much of the memoir as I sent. In four days I hope to be able to look at light business for a short time.[1]—Ever yours, T. D."

Before the end of the week he improved so much that he insisted on driving out for an hour; for what purpose we may safely conjecture. On Sunday and Monday he was again in bed, and denied to his friends; but he was in the midst of his family, watched by the loving care of his mother and sister, who had still no serious misgivings; and the idea that his life was in danger probably did not enter the mind of any human being. On Tuesday morning[2] I was suddenly summoned to his mother's house in Baggot Street, to see the most tragic sight my eyes had ever looked upon—the dead body of Thomas Davis. He had grown rapidly worse during the night, and at dawn he died in the arms of a faithful servant named Neville, who had lived in his family for many years. He was confident of recovery, Neville assured me, almost to the end; and spoke impatiently of interrupted work; work which was now to remain unfinished for ever. To me the spectacle I was summoned to witness was like the light suddenly gone out of the sky. The friendship that sweetened life, the sympathy that made labour easy, the confidence of ultimate success for our cause, which rayed out of his virile and luminous nature, seemed laid low with him. And when I retired from that fatal bed it was to send to the friends who loved him best, without a moment's warning or preparation, news that would leave them as desolate as I was.

Though it was the season when Dublin was emptiest of the cultivated class, a public funeral was immediately determined upon by

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[1] After five-and-thirty years my answer to this note has come back to me (in the Davis Papers), and nothing can more clearly exhibit the absence of all thought of danger, for his condition is made the subject of a pleasantry.

"MY DEAR DAVIS—I will do all you desire forthwith. When may I hope to see you? Leave word with your servant when you are well enough to be seen. I cannot now keep your illness a secret, because I told John O'Hagan and McCarthy yesterday; but I will prevent them going to see you. John says you have an opportunity of rivalling Mirabeau, by dying at this minute; but he begs you won't be tempted by the inviting opportunity.—Always yours, C. G. D."—Davis Papers Duffy to Davis.

[2] September 16th, 1845.

Dear W/ Mane has a
bad attack of scarlatina
with a horrid sore throat
I dont mention this
to <u>any</u> one for a very
delicate reason I have,
but pray get the Curran
Speeches read instead
~~[illegible]~~ the heavy
Election, Hume Conways
Part of 1812 sent back to him
read & correct yourself

so much of the memoir as I sent.

In 4 days I hope to be able to look at light business for a short time

ever yours

D

a few leading men, and the assent of his family obtained. But it was no cold funereal pageantry that accompanied him to the grave. In all the years of my life, before and since, I have not seen so many grown men weep bitter tears as on that September day. The members of the Eighty-Two Club, the Corporation of Dublin, and the Committee of the Repeal Association, took their place in the procession as a matter of course; but it would have soothed the spirit of Davis to see mixed with the green uniforms and scarlet gowns men of culture and intellect, without distinction of party and outside of all political parties. The antiquarians and scholars of the Royal Irish Academy, the Councils of the Archæological and Celtic Societies, the artists of the Royal Hibernian Academy, the committee of the Dublin Library, sent deputations, and the names best known in Irish literature and art might be read next day in the long list of mourners. He was buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery, in latter years the burying-place of the Protestant community, but once the pleasure-grounds of the suburban villa where John Keogh, the Catholic leader, took counsel with Wolfe Tone, the young Protestant patriot, how to unite the jarring creeds in a common struggle for Ireland. The Whig and Conservative Press did him generous justice. They recognised in him a man unbiassed by personal ambition and untainted by the rancour of faction, who loved but never flattered his countrymen; and who, still in the very prime of manhood, was regarded not only with affection and confidence, but with veneration, by his associates. The first proposal for a monument came from a Tory; and Whigs and Tories rivalled his political friends in carrying the project to completion. To the next meeting of the Association O'Connell wrote: "I solemnly declare that I never knew any man who could be so useful to Ireland in the present stage of the struggle." O'Brien on the same occasion described him as one who "united a woman's tenderness with the soul of a hero."[1] Even Mr John O'Connell discovered, somewhat late in the day, that "if there did exist differences of opinion" (between him and other Nationalists), "they were differences of honest and sincere conviction." But the bulk of the people throughout the island little knew the calamity which had befallen them. A writer of the period compared them to children who had lost their father, and were unconscious of all the danger and trouble such a fact implied. In Dublin it was necessarily different; many of the

[1] I fear that I could not have said so much *vivâ voce*, for that letter was blurred by many a tear which would have stifled my utterance in a public meeting.—Cahermoyle, Sept. 20, '45.

industrious classes knew and loved him; and it was noted as a strange instance of unsought popularity that the ballad singers of the Liberties, who had no longer, as of old, a Swift or a Goldsmith for their poet, sang a lament for Davis to street audiences in the traditional tropes and jingles which he had so long laboured to supersede by poetry and sense. "Each brave Milesian, of Erin's blessed nation" (was invoked by the poets of Meath Street) "to join in the mournful theme for the brave son of Granu, young Davis the hero, who never knew terror or shame."

Judging him now a generation after his death, when years and communion with the world have tempered the exaggerations of youthful friendship, I can confidently say that I have not known a man so nobly gifted as Thomas Davis. If his articles had been spoken speeches his reputation as an orator would have rivalled Grattan's; and the beauty and vigour of his style were never employed for mere show, as they sometimes were by Grattan; he fired not rockets, but salvos of artillery. If his programmes and reports, which were the plans and specifications of much of the best work done in his day, had been habitually associated with his name, his practical skill would have ranked as high as O'Connell's. Among his comrades who were poets, he would have been chosen laureate, though poetry was only his pastime. And these gifts leave his rarest qualities untold. What he was as a friend, so tender, so helpful, so steadfast, no description will paint. His comrades had the same careless confidence in him men have in the operations of nature, where irregularity and aberration do not exist. Like Burke and Berkeley, he inspired and controlled all who came within the range of his influence, without aiming to lead or dominate. He was singularly modest and unselfish; but the phrases employed to express modesty and unselfishness are weak and absurd when applied to him. In a long lifetime I have never known any man remotely resemble him in these qualities. The chief motive-power of a party and a cause, labouring for them as a man of exemplary industry labours in his calling, he not only never claimed any recognition or reward, but discouraged allusion to his services by those who knew them best. Passionate enthusiasm is apt to become prejudice, but in Davis it was controlled not only by a disciplined judgment but by a fixed determination to be just. He brought to political controversy a fairness previously unexampled in Ireland. In all his writings there will not be found a single sentence reflecting ungenerously on any human being. He had set himself the task of building up a nation, a task not beyond his strength had fortune been

kind. Now that the transactions of that day have fallen into their natural perspective, now that we know what has perished and what survives of its conflicting opinions, we may plainly see that, imperfectly as they knew him, the Irish race—the grown men of 1844—in the highest diapason of their passions, in the widest range of their capacity for action or endurance, were represented and embodied in Thomas Davis better than in any man then living. He had predicted a revolution; and if fundamental change in the ideas which move and control a people be a revolution, then his prediction was already accomplished. In conflicts of opinion near at hand a prodigious change made itself manifest, traceable to teaching of which he was the chief exponent. During his brief career, scarcely exceeding three years, he had administered no office of authority, mounted no tribune, published no books, or next to none, and marshalled no following; but with the simplest agencies, in the columns of a newspaper, in casual communication with his friends and contemporaries, he made a name which, after half a century, is still recalled with enthusiasm or tears, and will be dear to students and patriots while there is an Irish people. It is well that it should:—

> Keep but the model safe, new men will rise
> To study it, and other days to prove
> How great a good was Luria having lived.

In the language of the Celtic annalist, "a new soul came into Ireland" with Davis, and his death was followed by such discouragement and dismay that for a time the soul seemed to have fled again. A few days after his funeral I followed my young wife to the grave, and when I left my desolate home to muster my comrades for the work to which we stood pledged, I found that misfortune had not come single, but in troops. Of the little band of his fellow-students in the university who were the life and light of the Young Ireland party, there was not one ready to take up his task; by a calamitous mischance there was scarcely one who was not at that moment disabled from doing his ordinary share of public work. At the beginning of autumn John Dillon had been ordered to his native air for a chest disease, and was an invalid when the fatal news reached him. He had burst a small blood-vessel at the scene between O'Connell and Davis in the debate on the Colleges Bill, and had never wholly recovered.

"Your letter [he wrote me] was like a thrust from a dagger. I had not even heard that he was unwell. This calamity makes the world look black. God knows I am tempted to wish myself well out of it. I am doing you a grievous wrong to leave you alone at this melancholy time. I was preparing

to be off by the post-car, but my friends have one and all protested against it, and I verily believe that they would keep me by force if nothing else would. God help us, my dear fellow; I don't know how we can look at one another when we meet."[1]

He was peremptorily ordered to refrain from all business, but it was impossible to keep a man like Dillon from coming to the aid of his friends in such a conjuncture; and it is a touching evidence of the difficulties under which he made the attempt that his contribution proved unfit for use, even when aid was so much wanted. For the first time he found himself a rejected contributor in the *Nation;* and the manner in which he received the news will illustrate his sweet and generous character.

"I am very much pleased," he wrote, "that you did not insert that letter. Even when I sent it I knew it was below mediocrity; but it was the best I could do in the state I was in. In fact, nothing could have induced me to write at all but the impossibility of refusing your request under such circumstances. The *Nation* has surpassed itself in the last two numbers. The one before the last was amongst the very best, and the article headed 'Another Year' in yesterday's, in my judgment, has never been surpassed in the *Nation* or elsewhere. It was a trumpet blast. While I read it my heart bounded with hope for the first time during many weeks. Who wrote it? It is not like your style, and yet I do not know where else to look for its strength and extreme clearness of thought. It is replete with manliness, sound sense, and strong genuine feeling, without the slightest tinge of obscurity or fustian.[2] It vexes me much that I can do nothing at this time to lighten the load of your labour and sorrow. I would have gone to town if the state of my health did not absolutely forbid it. I have got a return of that ugly cough which brought on some startling symptoms before I left. I am combatting it with the sharpest remedies I can. While I write I have two troublesome blisters on my neck and breast. I trust, my dear Duffy, you will make a brave stand against this affliction. It requires no little fortitude to pursue an occupation every act of which calls to your mind the remembrance of one you loved so well."

In the end Dillon was sent to Madeira for the winter by his medical advisers, and for many months his wise counsel and effectual aid were lost to the party which he had helped to create.

MacNevin was also in the country, not consciously an invalid, but disturbed by the first symptoms of an unknown disease, which proved in the end the most painful affliction that can befall a man of intellect. On receiving the calamitous news he wrote:—

"I have been in a state of the greatest agony since I got your letter last evening. I could have lost nearer than he with less anguish;—he was such

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[1] *Nation* Papers, Dillon to Duffy. September 19th.
[2] The article referred to was written by the editor.

a noble, gentle creature. And to me always exaggerating my good qualities, never finding fault, and never, never with an angry look or word. He was more than a brother; and I loved him better than all the brothers I have. Our bond of union is broken; what mournful meetings ours will be in future! I cannot go up; it is *impossible.* There is no use in troubling you with the reason. But I will go up early in October, and meanwhile will do all I can for you. Can we ever repair this damage? What shall we do to replace him? My God, how horror-struck will be Dillon and Smith O'Brien! I never closed my eyes since I got the fatal news. It is the most dreadful visitation that could have fallen upon us, and to come upon you just at this period of your calamity. I sent up some pages of notice of him. I could not write anything else."

A few days later he wrote again:—

"It is some sort of consolation to find that all the country is paying its duty to his memory. As for myself, everything I see, every book, every subject that I think of, brings him before me with all his worth and kindness. I feel so lonely and bereaved, the soul has gone out of all my hopes for the future, and even the conviction of the dear friends I have still goes but a short way to reconcile me to a loss that I know is irreparable. I had a mournful satisfaction in reading the beautiful tribute in the *Nation* to his extraordinary virtues. . . . I have a great favour to ask of you—that you will lend me your portrait of Davis to get a copy done of it.[1] I know I am not wrong in thinking you will collect all that he has written of any value; and what did he write that was not vital with genius?"

The insidious disease which was preying on MacNevin was no doubt aggravated by pondering on all we had lost; a little later he announced that he was done with speech-making, and that I must not even count upon his writing regularly for the *Nation.*

"I endeavoured, my dear Charles, to write what you wished, and I found it to be utterly impossible. However well I knew the subject, I could not write a sentence. In fact, the feeling has grown on me daily that it is not honest of me to continue our present arrangements. The difficulty of composition is every hour growing greater, and the result more worthless. . . . I will write for the *Nation* as often as I can, and I never will fail to make the effort. But the good that was in me has, I fear, passed away; my spirits are gone, and I cannot look at my pen and paper without a shudder. This is a humiliating confession; but it is truer than any of Jean Jacques'."

In his ordinary temper MacNevin was gay and sparkling, exploding in epigrams and joining cordially in the laughter he provoked. When he returned to town I found him silent and morose; at times he broke

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[1] The only portrait of Davis in existence was a cabinet picture painted for me by Henry M'Manus, R.H.A., sketchy and rude, but a vivid likeness. Mr Burton, after Davis's death, drew from memory, with the aid of this rude portrait, a grand and impressive head, which, however, represented the soul and spirit rather than the physical features of his friend. It was lithographed, and has been frequently reproduced on wood and steel.

into sudden merriment, but in the state of feeling among his associates at the time, his laughter was more painful and ghastly than his reveries. Though he struggled for months before finally succumbing, the brilliant gifts and generous nature of MacNevin were lost for ever to the cause and the men whom he loved so well.

To complete our difficulties, two other of Davis's college friends, united to him by the ties of confidence and affection, John O'Hagan and John Pigot, were about to enter a pleader's chambers in London, and would necessarily be absent for a year—a year that promised to be critical and decisive in Irish affairs. Neither of them had written much, nor spoken in public; but one of them brought a rare insight and sagacity, and the other a constant fire of enthusiasm, to the counsels of their friends. When I add that M'Carthy and Barry wrote only verses or occasional critical papers, and Mangan and Williams verses exclusively, and that Doheny's strength did not lie in journalism, it will be understood at what disadvantage the paper and the party were about to be placed. The entire staff, indeed, on which both depended, were either fatally disabled for present work, or absent from the centre of action for an indefinite period.

Outside his political circle Davis had friends who helped the journal from personal good-will. Mr Maddyn had contributed valuable critical and historical papers from the beginning, and edited one of the "Library of Irish Orators"; but he did not sympathise with our main purpose, and he was connected with the Conservative Press in London, and unwilling to run the risk of being misunderstood. He would not positively promise any further contributions; but he was eager to unite with us at least in making the genius and character of his friend known in both countries.

"I need not say," he wrote to me, "how your letter stunned me. I can hardly credit the intelligence still. With no one in this world did I more sympathise. I never loved any man so much, and I respected him just as much. But we all felt the same way towards him: let us see what we can do to honour his memory and to preserve his fame. The man Thomas Davis ought to be exhibited in as strong colours as consist with truth, not only to his countrymen, but to the citizens of this Empire. The world must be told what his nature was, how large and patriotic were his designs, and how truly pure were his purposes. For he was one of those spirits who quicken others by communication with them. For the purpose of recording his career in a literary shape, I venture to suggest that his personal friends should meet and determine that his life should be given to the public, and that all of them should contribute whatever materials they could to such a work. You ought to be the recorder of his life; for that office you of all his friends are the most fitted, not alone by talents and literary power, but by

thoroughly close and catholic sympathy with the noble Davis in all things. There was more of the *idem velle* and *idem nolle* between him and you than between any other of that large circle who admired him living and lament him dead. Your close intimacy and identification for the last three memorable years, your agreement with him on all practical and speculative questions of Irish politics, your personal cognisance of the extent of his unseen labours to serve the country he loved—these things seem to command that you honour yourself and your friend by taking charge of his memory. Let me entreat of you to resolve upon doing so."

They have read history to little purpose who will feel any surprise that faction was busy during this period of confusion and discouragement, making bad worse. It offered a favourable opening for Mr John O'Connell and the little knot of conspirators who desired the destruction of the Young Irelanders, and they eagerly seized on it. In the Association there was decorous grief and solemn lamentations for the loss the country had endured, but in private the retainers rubbed their greasy hands with glee that the enemy of the Liberator and the Young Liberator was gone. Before he was a week in his grave we heard from the provinces whispered disparagements of his memory, traceable, as we believed, to a common source;[1] and the *Pilot* renewed its warnings against the concealed adversaries of religion who had too long got the ear of the people. Maurice O'Connell's instincts, which were generous, and his capacity, which was considerable, drew him towards the young men, and away from these cabals; and he wrote a personal tribute to the memory of Davis, perfectly sincere, I am persuaded, which was altogether incompatible with any belief in the romances manufactured at the Corn Exchange, and which was published at the period of their briskest circulation.[2]

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[1] *Ex. gr.*, "Miss N—— asked me the other day, with the most mysterious curiosity, about Mr Davis. She had heard from Fr. D—— that he was an infidel, and that his death was a great blessing," etc.—Private letter from H. M'L—— *penes me.*

[2] For Maurice O'Connell's letter, see note in Appendix.

It is worth noting that just so much knowledge of Davis began to prevail among literary men in England as resulted in confounding him with one of his comrades. Lord Jeffrey wrote to his daughter at this time—"Granny (Lady Jeffrey) went to church, and I read a very interesting little volume of "Irish Ballad Poetry," published by that poor Duffy, of the *Nation*, who died so prematurely the other day. There are some most pathetic and many most spirited pieces, and all, with scarcely an exception, so entirely *National.* Do get the book and read it. I am most struck with 'Soggarth Aroon,' after the two first stanzas; and a long, racy, authentic, sounding dirge for the Tyrconnel Princes. But you had better begin with 'The Irish Emigrant,' and 'The Girl of Loch Dan,' which immediately follows, which will break you in more gently to the wilder and more impassioned parts. . . . . God bless all poets! and you will not grudge them a share even of your Sunday benedictions" (Lord Cockburn's "Life of Lord Jeffrey," vol. ii. p. 405).

Somewhat later Miss Mitford, in her memoirs, devoted a chapter to Davis,

And now it might well seem that Young Ireland was approaching its extinction. Its leaders were dead or disabled; and its enemies, like camp followers after a disastrous battle, were stabbing the wounded and plundering the dead. But not so does a true cause perish. The cause so baffled and repressed speedily found new outlets; and as for the party, whatever is commonly known of Young Ireland—whatever is associated with the name in the brief and misleading notices of contemporary history—nearly all that will be permanently remembered of the labours or sufferings of the men who composed it—were events accomplished after the death of Davis and the apparent rout and dispersion of his friends. Meagher had never seen Davis except in some public place, and Meagher was destined to rival Vergniaud in the suddenness and splendour of his success as an orator. M'Gee had seen Davis only once, and M'Gee, in wide sweep of imagination, in the persistency and variety of his labours, in everything but in the moral qualities, where Davis was unapproachable, closely resembled the master who was lost. Devin Reilly had pursued Davis in the streets to feast his eyes on one whom he so greatly honoured, but he had never exchanged a word with him. James Finton Lalor was living the life

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Speaking of his last poem, "The Sack of Baltimore," she says: "The more we study this ballad, the more extraordinary does it appear that it should have been the work of an unpractised hand. Not only is it full of spirit and of melody, qualities not incompatible with inexperience in poetical composition, but the artistic merit is so great. Picture succeeds to picture, each perfect in itself, and each conducing to the effect of the whole. There is no careless line, or a word out of place; and how the epithets paint—'fibrous sod,' 'heavy balm,' 'shearing sword'! The Oriental portion is as complete in what the French call local colour as the Irish. He was learned, was Thomas Davis, and wrote of nothing that he could not have taught. It is something that he should have left a poem like this altogether untinged by party politics, for the pride and admiration of all who share a common language, whether Celt or Saxon."

It is proper to notice that there was one exception to the general chorus of regret. Mr Edward Kenealy, in latter times called Dr Kenealy, and known for his connection with a popular delusion in England, contributed a paper on "Maclise" to the *University Magazine*, in which he took occasion to express his contempt for the hopeless monomania under which Ireland laboured when men "raised altars and busts to a dog-faced demagogue of nine-and-twenty." In the next number of the magazine the editor apologised for this libel and utterly repudiated it. While Davis was living Mr Kenealy held widely different language. "I am glad," he wrote to Davis nine months before his death, "I am glad you have disabused my mind of its error, as from what I know of you and the noble spirit which animates your writings, I cannot suppose the bearing of the *Nation* towards me was intentional, and because it has relieved the party before alluded to from what was an unfounded suspicion. For the very courteous and gentlemanly spirit in which you replied to my intemperate outburst, you have my warm thanks. Believe me, you are the last person in the world of whom I would have said or written a word of bitterness." Davis Papers: E. Kenealy (Cork, January 2nd, 1845) to Thomas Davis.

of a hermit, and knew literally no one outside his own family; but Lalor came in the end to modify the action of the party more than anyone then living. None of these men had written a line in the *Nation* at this time, or, except M'Gee, knew that they could write. Mitchel's "Life of Aodh O'Neil" was still unpublished, and few suspected the remarkable powers as a writer and speaker he was destined to develop. Smith O'Brien loved and honoured Davis, but up to the era of his death he had stood apart from Young Ireland; his identification with it dates, as we shall see, from later transactions. And there were still to come names of both sexes, as significant as any of these, with whom the reader will make acquaintance later.

But those succours were distant, and the future depended in no small degree upon what might be done on the instant. The one thing—which none of Davis's friends thought permissible—was to abandon our task: the question was simply by what method it might be best promoted under the new conditions. Appeals and remonstrances were made to me, from all the friends who remained, to take up the relinquished work. Before this time I had lived a journalist's life, hating, as students commonly do, the platform and personal exhibition of any sort. I knew that the singular influence which Davis exercised over the judgment and conscience of his contemporaries was a personal gift which had passed away as completely as his personal life; I knew how unapproachable were his endowments and attainments; but something might be done to carry out his programme, to fill up the fatal gap in our ranks, and to keep the green flag flying. I answered the appeal by giving up literary leisure and the luxury of books and reverie; and from that time forth my life was passed in the fever and tumult of political action. I can scarce recall without stirring the fountain of tears the generous help that came from many quarters. The two young barristers who were soon to leave for London set to work with a zeal which in the barren remnant of life I have rarely seen men employ except for their personal interests. They took up the tangled thread of Davis's labours in the learned societies, they conferred with his Conservative friends to make sure of a statue by a competent artist, they helped to collect his scattered writings, and their alacrity and success in this work furnished the measure of the loss their absence would entail. Among the Cahermoyle Correspondence of that time I find a hasty note of mine to O'Brien, which exhibits the purpose kept in view in all that was being done.

"*We* know what he was to the Committee of the Association, to the Press, to his fellow-labourers; but what do the people know of this? Our duty is to make his name familiar and household to Ireland—to make him to his country more than Burns is to Scotland, more than Franklin is to America. It is my conviction that neither of these men matched him in vigour and variety of powers, much less in his great loving heart. What you can do for him is to put yourself at the head of a movement which a multitude of men are anxious to make, to give him a monument, a statue, and a portrait. If the Association will vote £300 towards his monument, I have no doubt his friends will subscribe twice as much. We have caused a cast to be taken from his face, and with this, an admirable portrait which I have of him, and his own knowledge of him, Christopher Moore will be able to make a perfect likeness in bust or statue.[1] The portrait I will send to London to be engraved in the best style, to be published as we may hereafter consider best. His greatest monument will be his writings and his Life, which I will have published in the 'Library of Ireland,' when there is leisure to consult on the most suitable method. Out of his grave he will kindle new hearts to complete his labours. Death has dissipated calumny and jealousy, and he will be listened to now as the man of his generation."[2]

That death had not quite dissipated calumny we have seen; but I regarded the *Pilot* as outside the pale of controversy. To answer imputations by such a man as Mr Barrett on such a man as Thomas Davis seemed to me little short of ignominy. I was persuaded he could damage no one in the end but his patrons. Some of my friends thought differently, or thought, at any rate, that the end which would see this sort of poetic justice accomplished might be unpleasantly remote. They urged me to interpose. Dillon, on the eve of his departure for Madeira, wrote on the subject for the second or third time, as much in a passion as was possible to his sweet and considerate nature. "The notion of listening in silence," he said, "to these attacks is altogether absurd. There is no calumny so outrageous that ignorant people will not believe it, if it be not contradicted." As far as credulity is concerned, Dillon doubtless was right. Ireland afterwards passed through the agony of a famine, through a despairing attempt to snatch her rights, and through a campaign of parliamentary agitation, and at every stage honest men (echoed by many more who were not honest) reiterated these calumnies with a rooted belief in their truth. How far contradiction would have availed is another question. The policy of the *Nation* from the beginning had been to engage in a contest with stipendiaries and camp followers under no circumstances, and from this policy I would not depart. But the *Pilot* maintained a precarious

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[1] Moore made a small model of a bust, which I gave in later years to the National Gallery in Dublin.

[2] Cahermoyle Correspondence. Duffy to O'Brien.

existence solely by favour of the O'Connell family, and I resolved to pass by the agents and hold the patrons responsible. A conflict with the Association at the moment would have found the young men ill prepared; but to a party which means to live by honest arts, there are many things more disastrous than defeat. In the next *Nation* I opened the subject, and warned all whom it concerned that if the slanders did not cease it would no longer be a safe recreation. "The humblest of Davis's friends," I said, in language which was much canvassed at the time, "would (if the necessity arose) take by the throat the highest head that breathed a slander upon him."[1]

The attacks on Davis stung MacNevin into a rage, and he flew to his pen for relief. A lecture on the state and prospects of the National question was the result, which he printed and sent to me from the country, in proof. I had no suspicion at the time of his mental condition, and I read it with consternation. In defending our friend fiercely we were within our rights, but in assailing the leader of the cause we served, while peace was possible, we would have imitated the offence which moved MacNevin's scorn; and this was a fault into which he fell. I strongly recommended the suppression of the pamphlet, or, if he would publish, large and fundamental alterations in the text. This was his answer:—

"You may be sure, my dear Charles, that I accept with thanks, and adopt with pleasure, your advice. You never gave me bad advice, and I know your warm interest in me, and which, be assured, I deeply reciprocate. But pray look at the last part of the lecture . . . I am profoundly indifferent to the opinion of that class of politicians. I have done with them entirely. I mean to resume writing for the *Nation*, but only for love and good-will. I wish you would send me to-morrow the proofs, altered as you please, because adopting your suggestions is just as pleasant as adopting my own original thoughts."

It is possible—it is, perhaps, even probable—that a conflict with the Association at that time could not have been long postponed, but for an exposure which befell the *Pilot* and covered its friends with confusion and shame. The decision of the Catholic Primate to give the new Colleges a fair trial had greatly exasperated the gentlemen who were watching over the interests of religion in that journal, and it was determined, it may be surmised, to punish him with the only weapon at their disposal; the same poisoned weapon which had been brandished against Davis. It was whispered among the people that the Archbishop

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[1] *Nation.* October 4th.

was about to become a Protestant, and no wonder—so the whisper ran—for his mother had been a Presbyterian. After a little, when the time was supposed to have arrived for another stroke, the *Pilot* announced in large type, in its leading page, that the Archbishop was insane—a circumstance which doubtless would account for everything in his conduct which had perplexed the people. "He was incapable of attending the meeting of bishops at Maynooth owing to the unsound state of his mind, and he must relinquish the discharge of his duties and live in retirement for some time to come." The announcement was copied into nearly every journal of the Empire, and this publicity was its ruin. The *Pilot* had so miserable a circulation and so miserable a character that its slanders were permitted to enjoy the immunity of contempt. But when the statement was read in respectable journals there was a clamour of indignation. The Primate at the very time was conducting a conference of bishops at Maynooth, over which he had presided during six days, and his mental and physical health was perfect. The statement was immediately contradicted, but several numbers of the *Pilot* were issued without any withdrawal or modification of the original falsehood. An archbishop, however, is a personage who cannot long be misrepresented with impunity; the clergy of the Archdiocese of Armagh, in district after district, met to express their disgust and indignation at what they described, in language not too strong for the provocation, as an atrocious calumny.[1] Before the long array of ecclesiastics who signed these angry protests, the journal had of course to recant and apologise. And for a time it was no longer of any service as an organ of ingenious inventions. For a time indeed it was dangerous to employ Mr Barrett in the only work in which he was serviceable, for men of character fled from a cause with which his name was associated.[2]

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[1] Declaration of the Clergy in various districts of the Archdiocese of Armagh, advertised in the *Nation*, Oct. 12th and 19th, 1845.

[2] Frederick Lucas was, beyond comparison, the most gifted and trusted of Catholic journalists in that day. In authority and knowledge he stood nearly alone among his class. He has left on record his estimate of Mr Barrett's conduct in this transaction, and generally as a party hack; and as Mr Lucas differed *toto cœlo* from the ecclesiastical policy of the Primate, it may be accepted as testimony wrung from an honest man by frank scorn of an unworthy ally.

"The only thing that could diminish its weight" [the libel on the Archbishop] "or make it of little importance, was the character of the mouthpiece through which it got vent. If the character of the *Pilot* be such that an enormous lie told of the highest individual becomes suddenly of little importance, solely because it is elaborately stated in the *Pilot's* largest type, the case is very easy of comprehension. It must be that no one thinks of believing the *Pilot;* that the character of its editor for honour

A truce ensued. The Collection of Davis's Essays and Poems, the publication of a memoir in the *Nation*, of a portrait by the most accomplished painter, and a statue by the most renowned sculptor in Ireland, fixed the public attention on his memory till the people gradually came to know in some degree what sort of a friend they had lost.[1]

The temporary dispersion of the Young Irelanders left a more visible gap in Conciliation Hall than in the *Nation* office. Among O'Connell's personal staff there was not one man capable of doing more than echoing the policy of his leader, and, from the time the *rammolissement* set in, the policy of the once resourceful leader had been little else than schemes only mooted to be abandoned, or a languid acceptance of proposals originating with O'Brien or the Young Irelanders. During the three months of Mr John O'Connell's management the Association had constantly lost ground, and it was now destined to recede more and more, for want of the higher faith and clearer purpose which were withdrawn. For a time the people probably saw little of this. It is only an expert who knows with

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and veracity are at the lowest ebb; and that no human being dreams of regulating his belief or disbelief by the voucher of such a being. . . . If any respectable Catholics, lay or ecclesiastical, are really the founders of *Old Ireland*" [*Old Ireland* was a weekly paper then recently established], "we venture to give them one friendly warning. It is, to sell that part of the stock-in-trade which goes by the name of 'Mr Barrett,' if they can find a purchaser; if not, to get rid of him upon any terms—to sweep him and everything that belongs to him out of the street door—and to put forward some sounder and less tainted name in the front of their battle."—*Tablet*, Oct. 18th, 1845.

Mr Lucas differed widely from Davis on the Colleges question, and probably in his aims and agencies generally; but how he estimated the character and nature of the man will be gathered from a note he wrote me immediately after Davis's death:—

"The loss of so dear a friend, and that loss so sudden, is almost more afflicting for the moment than the other, which had been longer prepared and expected. I think I can enter in some degree into your feeling in regard to him you have lost, and I am the more glad that I once passed an evening with him, because the impression I received of his amiable and noble qualities enables me the better to appreciate the hold he must have had on the warmest feelings of your heart. I have, after my fashion, paid a short tribute to his memory in the *Tablet*, and I hope you will find in what I have said no word or phrase that offends reverence for the memory of the departed. May God have mercy on both! I shall have Mass said *for both*" [Davis and my wife] "at the earliest opportunity, that I may by this act at least, if by no other, enroll myself amongst the list of mourners."

[1] The statue by Hogan stands over his grave in Mount Jerome. The likeness is not striking, but the figure and attitude are characteristic. The ideal is that of a German student, spare, slender, and thoughtful; the action is that of an orator gathering up his robe with one hand while the other rests on a manuscript. For this action and for the truth to nature, there ought to be greater breadth of chest. Davis did not give the idea of a speculative, but of a vigorous and practical man.

certainty when the tide is going out, as it covers its retreat by a constant succession of apparent advances; and with this party on the ebb, the noise and movement of the popular flood were still heard, and there was a great historic three-decker on the waters with all sails set, bound as it seemed for a distant port, a spectacle of constant interest to sightseers; but in truth the tide was slowly retiring, and the three-decker lay hopelessly becalmed.

There was one harvest, however, which Conciliation Hall had not gathered and could not waste. Nationality had made prodigious progress among the cultivated classes. It was said that all who did not profit by the Union were now weary of it; and many who did profit by it shared the feeling; for nationality, like the air of heaven, penetrates into places most jealously barred against it. To some it came like an absorbing passion which loves great sacrifices; with some it was a mere sentiment; but an unequivocal change was felt throughout the entire community—a change which it might be hoped would bear fruit later; for opinion is the root from which action springs. It was a fact of great significance that the Irish names best known to the Empire and to Europe in the peaceful professions—Stokes and Anster, Kane and Burton—were found on the committee to commemorate Davis's career by a public statue. They did not, any of them, share his political aims, but assuredly no one who had held and preached the same opinions since the Union would have been selected by them for such a distinction. And Ferguson, who lay on a bed of sickness when Davis died, impatient that for the moment he could take no part in public, asked me to come to him, that he might ease his heart by expressing his sense of what we had lost. He read me fragments of a poem written under these circumstances, the most Celtic in structure and spirit of all the elegies laid on the tomb of Davis. The last verse sounded like a prophecy: it was at any rate a powerful incentive to take up our task anew.

"Oh, brave Young Men, my love, my pride, my promise,
'Tis on you my hopes are set,
In manliness, in kindliness, in justice,
To make Ireland a nation yet.
Self-respecting, self-relying, self-advancing,
In union, or in severance, free and strong;
And if God grant this, then, under God, to Thomas Davis
Let the greater praise belong!"

The measures by which the Young Ireland party was reorganised, by which it repelled the devices planned to ruin it, by which the

national cause was re-animated, and by which the direct and public attempt of O'Connell to destroy the party, with the purpose of renewing his relations with the Whigs, were encountered, and the disastrous results of the French Revolution in Ireland, remain to be told in the sequel of this narrative, published under the title of "Four Years of Irish History."

APPENDIX

APPENDIX.[1]

READERS OF THE *NATION*.

THE readers of the *Nation* were estimated to exceed a quarter of a million. At that time every copy of a newspaper bore a penny stamp, which carried it free through the post, and the quarterly return of stamps issued from the Custom House showed the quantity of each paper printed. The stamps consumed by the *Nation* exceeded ten thousand for each issue, a number far in excess of any other Irish journal. As the price of the paper was sixpence a copy, the people paid £250 a week for it. And it is to be noted that the special distribution of the *Nation* increased enormously the actual number of its readers. Three hundred copies went to newsrooms and Teetotal Societies, and were read by at least fifty persons each. Eleven hundred copies went to Repeal Wardens to be read aloud at weekly meetings, and each copy served from fifty to a hundred persons. Nine thousand copies were sold by agents or went directly to subscribers; and as the *Nation* was handed about like a magazine, and preserved for binding, it is certain that each of these copies reached more than a dozen readers, probably more than a score. Its local distribution was still more remarkable. In almost every town in Ireland the circulation of the *Nation* exceeded the circulation of the local papers representing the same opinion in the district. Old men still describe the fever with which they waited for its weekly issue, and the delight with which they lingered over it. This attraction extended to the official class, through whose hands the paper passed, and there were constant complaints of copies missing, and agents' parcels deficient of their proper numbers. To remedy this inconvenience it was suggested, by some person wanting in reverence for constituted authority, that an additional paper should be attached to each parcel with the inscription, "Please to steal this copy."

A stamp return of the period will enable the reader to understand the relative position of the Dublin journals as regards circulation :—

	Average Number of each Publication.	
	Quarter ending 30th Sept., 1843.	Quarter ending 31st Dec., 1843.
The Nation	9,500	10,730
Weekly Freeman	6,650	7,150
Weekly Warder	6,000	7,230
Weekly Register	2,461	3,154
The World	2,077	2,038
Evening Mail	940	886
Evening Post	2,769	2,932
Evening Packet	1,371	1,948
Pilot	1,615	1,923
Evening Freeman	859	1,146
	333	448
Daily Saunders	2,314	2,461
Daily Freeman	1,293	1,410

[1] Most of the NOTES which, in former editions of "YOUNG IRELAND," were placed at the ends of chapters, and one of which is so referred to at page 131 (*note* 1), Vol. II., have been transferred to this Appendix.

And to these details must be added the fact that its leading articles and verses were copied extensively in the Colonies and wholesale in the United States.

The Federal Controversy.

The tone of the leading Irish journals may be gathered from the subjoined *précis*, and a knowledge of it will greatly help the reader to understand the composition and character of the national party at that time.

The *Freeman's Journal*, then the only daily paper on the popular side, thought that the merit of Federalism was a question of degree. If the people of Ireland listened, as a final settlement of their relations with England, to the Federalism which some men talked, they would be justifying all the contempt and contumelious wrong which that connection had inflicted on them. But Federalism like Mr Grey Porter's was worth considering. And O'Connell, it might be assumed, would not have distracted the people by a new controversy without some practical end in view

The *Cork Examiner*, the leading national journal in Munster, gave forth an uncertain sound. It desired to be more clearly informed what was Federalism? An Irish Parliament composed of the Lords, Commons, and legitimate monarch of Ireland was intelligible to all minds; but the people did not understand the complicated idea of Federalism. What constituted the local affairs over which a Federal Legislature would have control? What did they include and what did they exclude? Mr Duffy's letter had some forcible reasoning, but O'Connell must not be embarrassed in the effort to benefit Ireland.

The *Belfast Vindicator*, the organ of the Repealers of Ulster, spoke more unreservedly. It could not deny that Mr O'Connell's letter had caused some alarm among the ranks of men originally enlisted under the banner of definite principle, whose leading orator and journalists had been imprisoned for the assertion of a definite principle, namely, the establishment of an independent Parliament in the kingdom of Ireland, free from the control or limitation of England. But people were more frightened than hurt. For the declaration of a preference for Federalism was Mr O'Connell's individual preference, which he was too wise and just to attempt to force on the Association. The General Committee or the Association itself had, as Mr Duffy insisted, as little right to pledge the people to Federalism as the Irish Parliament had to betray the trust reposed in them.

Among the Repeal papers in Leinster, outside the capital, the *Kilkenny Journal* held a leading place. Some of the most capable and experienced men of the national party were resident within the range of its circulation, and, in turn, it was understood that it lay within the range of their influence. This journal was of opinion that it would be treason to the country and injustice to the country's leader not to declare that the people viewed Federalism with suspicion. They desired to maintain the Crown as the only bond of connection between Great Britain and Ireland. O'Connell had himself taught them this principle, and it was a work which could not be done and undone like Penelope's web. Mr Duffy was right in declaring that a sudden change of policy, however justifiable in an individual, would argue fickleness, vacillation and want of purpose in a nation.

The *Limerick Reporter* thought Federalism was good, bad, or indifferent

according to the form in which it was proposed. Mr Duffy thought Federalism did not go so far as Repeal, but it might go farther. If, for example, Ireland did not send an equal number of members with England to the Imperial Congress, it would be a one-sided and inadmissible system.

The *Tipperary Vindicator* contended that the time when Federalists were admitted into the Association was the proper period to condemn Federalism, if it were a bad thing. At present it would be better to leave time to develop the views of the transcendently able leader than pronounce opinions one way or the other.

The *Newry Examiner* defended O'Connell from the imputation made by Tory journals, that he struck the national ensign from the flagstaff, and was about to substitute some motley *tricolor* for the historic Green. On the contrary, he had merely intimated the courteous purpose of hearing what an important party had to propose. Mr Duffy had asserted the right of free opinion in language sturdy enough, but never wanting in the respect due to O'Connell. There was one of his propositions from which it would be criminal to withhold immediate and cordial assent. It would be a flagrant breach of faith with the nation to attempt to force Federal opinions upon the Association, or to pledge that body to anything but the general principle of Repeal.

The *Southern Reporter*, which was the organ of Federalism in Munster, applauded the frankness and manliness of Mr Duffy's remonstrance, but considered that unlimited and implicit obedience to a single leader was the necessary condition of success in a national movement.

The *Kerry Examiner's* share in the controversy was noted because it was the local newspaper of the county where O'Connell resided, and where he was supposed to be supreme. But this journal declared that Federalism was not to be preferred to Repeal. Fortunately, however, O'Connell had not declared an absolute, but only a conditional preference for the Federal plan. The greatest Irish lawyers and statesmen had pronounced the Union to be a fraud by which Ireland had been robbed of her Parliament; she demanded a restoration of it, but Federalism was not a restoration—on the contrary, it was an abandonment of that claim.

Of the English journals which had advocated Repeal, the *Tablet* was the ablest and best informed, because Mr Lucas did not give the question merely a casual attention, but brought the whole force of his subtle intellect to solve a great political problem. On this occasion he declared that he did not agree with all the objections taken by Mr Duffy; but considered the general scope of his letter exceedingly sound and full of wisdom. Mr Porter's scheme of Federalism would not find favour in England because no scheme for a reconstruction of the Empire would be supported there; but if the Northern Protestants, who were then considering the question, proposed a reasonable and plausible arrangement, it would have a better chance of success than simple Repeal.

The *Leeds Times* did not regret the present controversy. Mr Duffy's remonstrance marked an important era in the movement. It formed the commencement of a discussion of the *means* by which the liberty of the Irish people was to be gained. Hitherto the movement had been popular and impulsive; it had now arrived at a stage when it must become reflective and legislative. The plan must be proposed, discussed, and decided upon by which Repeal was to be achieved and the Government of Ireland afterwards carried on. How were taxes to be levied, armies to be raised and paid, treaties with foreign countries to be formed? All these questions

must be discussed and settled before a sufficient amount of moral force could be brought to bear on the British Parliament to compel them to repeal the Act of Union.

O'Connell's Letter to O'Brien on the Federal Plan.

Darrynane Abbey, 21*st October* 1844.

My Dear O'Brien,—It was only yesterday I received the paper of which you have enclosed a copy. It is the "first project" of the Federalists; its history or its contents are not to reach the press *from us*, nor is there to be any commentary in the papers until it has appeared authentically as the act of subscribing Federalists. Subject to this caution, I submit it with the least possible delay to you for consideration. The principal actor in Dublin in the arrangement is William Murphy, called of "Smithfield." He is a man who has acquired enormous wealth and has long been a principal "brains carrier" of the Irish Whigs. A most shrewd, sensible man, Thomas Hutton, the very wealthy coachmaker, has assisted and is assisting. I could mention other influential—highly influential—men. There is to be a Federalist meeting in Belfast on the 26th. Caulfield, brother of Lord Charlemont, leads or presides. Sharman Crawford, Ross, the member for Belfast, and other notabilities attend. Hutton, who is a Presbyterian, goes there and passes through Armagh to muster as many important Presbyterians as he can, or at least to procure their signatures. O'Hagan the barrister attends the registry, and will be at the meeting on the 26th. I do not know whether it will be a public meeting, but a publication will emanate from it. In short, the movement is on foot. The effect must in any case, as it strikes me, be useful. It annihilates mere Whiggery.

I had nothing whatever to do directly or indirectly with the composition or the material of this document. I was merely sent a copy of it by a third person so soon as it was put into publication; and to you alone do I send a copy of it. I do not further adjudge its contents than considering them as a mere sketch. But this I say to you, that your accession to the Repeal cause has been the efficient cause of this advance, and I do not hesitate to say further and to *pledge* myself not to assent to any plan for the restoration of the Irish Parliament, or to any of the details of any such plan, that meets with your disapprobation. *We* go together; that is, you go with me, because I certainly will not go a single step without you. No man living has been more fortunate than you in the opportunity of showing personal independence. Whatever you do will be the result of your own judgment, and differ with me who may I will not differ with you. If you were in my opinion so wrong as to violate principle I would *retire;* I would cease to act, and would do so rather than join in any course I deemed unjust or injurious. But while I *do* act I will act with you. I am thoroughly convinced that without your accession to the Repeal cause years upon years would elapse before we made any impression upon the general Protestant mind. Ireland owes you an unlimited debt of gratitude, and the popular confidence in you can never be shaken. Consider then the document I send you attentively. Be prepared for its authentic publication. You probably will not commit yourself respecting its contents without *conference* as well as mature consideration. It is but a skeleton, and wants nerves and sinews

and flesh. There is enough for conference—and there are some promising imbs—but there must be more before we can consent to give it vitality.

I will not take one single step about it without giving you *previous* intimation and consulting with you fully and deliberately.

Believe me to be respectfully and faithfully yours,

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

W. S. O'BRIEN, M.P.

It need only be noted that these professions of a determination to act together were made ten days after O'Connell had written his public letter, declaring his preference for Federalism, on which he had not consulted O'Brien. They were made also several days after the *Nation* had opposed the scheme, when O'Brien's neutrality had become highly important.

EXTRACT FROM THE FEDERAL PROJECT, ENCLOSED IN THE FOREGOING LETTER.

"While all matters of foreign, commercial, and ecclesiastical policy, as well as the general taxation and expenditure of the United Kingdom, would by such an arrangement remain as now, within the exclusive control of the Imperial Legislature, such matters as the regulation and disposition of local taxation, the relief of the poor, and the development of the natural resources of the country would be provided for by the local assembly, which must necessarily be better qualified to discharge such functions.

"We utterly disclaim any intention of rendering the proposed measures in any degree subservient to the severance of the *legislative* connection between Great Britain and Ireland, which, thus reformed, we shall deem it our duty, as we believe it will be our interest, by every means in our power to maintain."

O'CONNELL'S LETTER TO DAVIS. [*Referred to in page* 130, Vol. II.]

DARRYNANE, 30*th October*, 1844.

MY DEAR DAVIS—My son John has given me to read your Protestant philippic from Belfast. I have undertaken to answer it, because your writing to my son seems to bespeak a foregone conclusion in your mind that we are in some way connected with the attacks upon the *Nation*. Now I most solemnly declare that you are most entirely mistaken—none of us has the slightest inclination to do anything that could in anywise injure that paper, or its estimable proprietor; and certainly we are not directly or indirectly implicated in the attacks upon it.

With respect to the "Italian Censorship," the *Nation* ought to be at the fullest liberty to abuse it: and as regards "the State Trial Miracle," the *Nation* should be at liberty to abuse not only that, but every other miracle from the days of the Apostles to the present.

But we Catholics, on the other hand, may be permitted to believe as many of these miracles as we may adopt either from credulity or convincing proofs; at the same time I see no objection to a Catholic priest arguing any

of these points or censuring, in suitable and civil terms, opinions contrary to his own.

As to the Cork attack upon a Protestant proselyte, you know that I publicly and most emphatically condemned it; as did the Catholic Press of Cork.

With respect to the *Dublin Review*, the word "insolence" appears to me to be totally inapplicable—all the *Review* did (and I have examined it again deliberately was to insist that a man who from being a Catholic became a Protestant, was not a faithworthy witness in his attacks upon the Catholic clergy. Now, independent of that man's religion, of which I care nothing, there never lived a more odious or disgusting public writer, with one single exception, and that is the passage in which he praises you.[1]

The "insolence" of the *Dublin Review* consisted, as I have said, of merely stating that a pervert from Catholicity, who abused the Catholic clergy, was a suspicious witness in declaring their guilt. Would you not have a right, if a person who, from being a Protestant became a Catholic and abused the Protestant clergy, to state that his evidence against them ought to be considered as suspicious, or even unworthy of belief? Yet for no greater offence than that, the *Review* is attacked, and a high and a haughty tone of threatening assumed in speaking of it.

I really think you might have spared the insinuation that you and other Protestants were "pioneering the way to power," for men who would establish any sort of Catholic ascendency. I know this, and I declare it most solemnly, that in the forty years I have been labouring for the public I never heard one bigoted expression, not only in our public meetings but in our committees and private discussions, from a Catholic; but I have often felt amongst SOME of the Liberal Protestants I have met with that there was not the same soundness of generous liberality amongst them as amongst the Catholics.

I hate bigotry of every kind, Catholic, Protestant, or Dissent, but I do not think there is any room for my interfering by any public declaration at present. I cannot join in the exaltation of Presbyterian purity or brightness of faith, at the same time that I assert for everybody a perfect right to praise both the one and the other, liable to be assailed in argument by those who choose to enter into the controversy at the other side. But with respect to the *Dublin Review*, I am perfectly convinced the *Nation* was in the wrong. However, I take no part either one way or the other in the subject. As to my using my influence to prevent this newspaper war, I have no such influence that I could bring to bear: you really can much better influence the continuance or termination of this bye battle than I can. All I am anxious about is the property in the *Nation*. I am most anxious that it should be a lucrative and profitable concern. My desire is to promote its prosperity in every way I could; I am besides proud as an Irishman of the talent displayed in it: and by no one more than by yourself. It is really an honour to the country; and if you would lessen a little of your Protestant zeal, and not be angry when you "play at bowls in meeting rubbers," I should hope that, this skirmish being at an end, the writers for the *Nation*

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[1] Smith O'Brien had a very different opinion of Maddyn. Davis wrote a little earlier: "O'Brien is in delight with your book. He says not three men in the empire could write so well, and hopes and expects you to be with us and for us. God grant it."—Davis to Maddyn, 28th September, '44.

will continue their soul-stirring, spirit-enlivening strains, and will continue "to pioneer the way" to genuine Liberty, to perfect liberality, and entire political equality for all religious persuasions.

If I did not believe that the Catholic religion *could* compete upon equal and free terms with any other religion, I would not continue a Catholic for one hour.

You have vexed me a little by the insinuations which your letter necessarily contains, but I heartily forgive you; you are an exceedingly clever fellow, and I should most bitterly regret that we lost you by reason of any Protestant monomania.

We Papists *require* co-operation, support, combination, but we do not *want* protection or patronage.

I beg of you, my dear Davis, to believe, as you may do in the fullest confidence, that I am most sincerely,

Your attached friend,

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

PEEL'S CONCESSIONS AND THE YOUNG IRELANDERS.

Among the serious misconceptions and savage misrepresentations to which the writers of the *Nation* have been subjected in England from time to time, it is worth while, in the interests of truth, to take notice of how their conduct in this business impressed a party journalist, opposed to the Government whose measures they welcomed. The *Morning Chronicle*, a Whig organ at that time, said :—

"Notwithstanding irreconcilable differences of opinion with our Dublin contemporary the *Nation*, and the Young Ireland of which it is the representative, we have long thought well of the spirit of political independence and earnestness observable in the conduct of both. That the *Nation* is not always civil, nor even decently just to the Whigs and ourselves, does not lessen the pleasure we have in acknowledging that it at least does something to create in Ireland one of the things which Ireland most wants—an independent public opinion. We have noted also with satisfaction, that on general questions of policy connected with the material and moral improvement of Ireland this influential journal is fully as earnest as on Repeal itself. It shows no sneaking kindness for special grievances for the sake of their reaction on political discontent, and would, we do believe, cheerfully relinquish the finest grievance in the world without a thought of the political capital into which it might be improved. The tone of this important organ of Irish opinion has always been sound on the subject more particularly of education. It has not been backward on fit occasions to do ample and handsome justice to the system of primary schools established in 1831-2, although that system was the work of an Imperial Legislature, and not only of an Imperial Legislature but of a Whig Cabinet, and not only a Whig Cabinet in general but of Lord Stanley in particular. In the same spirit we are glad to see it go heart and hand with Mr Wyse in his endeavours to press on Parliament and the Ministry the subject of improved and extended academical education. Young Ireland asks no question about Mr Wyse's soundness in the Repeal faith, cheers him on, all tainted as he is with the heresy of Imperialism, and is prepared to hope all things and thankfully

accept any really good thing even from the Cabinet that wrongfully imprisoned Mr O'Connell and Mr Duffy."

It may be noted that the policy pursued did not meet universal assent among the party. MacNevin, who was the most sensitive to opinion and the least able to stand alone, took alarm from the talk of his country neighbours that Repeal was to be sacrificed for these concessions, and was so disheartened by the ignorance of the Western peasantry that for a moment he was in despair. I find among his letters one from a friend who answered his objections and quieted his fears :—

"Touching Peel and O'Connell, let me say, with the Duke, there was no compromise, there is no compromise, and there shall be no compromise. Peel may bid as high as he pleases, but he can bid nothing equivalent to what must be abandoned. Rest you easy in your rural groves, and fear nothing on the score of a new *Pacata Hibernia*. I deny and repudiate your theory about the people. If they were all bred the seris of Connaught squireens, their independence—I mean their *personal* independence, their recognition of the fact that they are men with certain human powers and human rights—would be distant. But you must not judge the people of Ireland by your present neighbours. Did you ever make a *bawlie* with an Ulster farmer? He would puzzle you, I promise you, on any subject within his range; on the Bible for example, or crops, or profit and loss (he is rather too wide-awake on the last point). Look at the Munster peasantry; they have not the shrewdness of the Northerns, but they have a higher and manlier nature, more imagination, more sympathy, more self-denial. Remember that some of the best songs in the "Spirit" were written by Munster peasants in intervals of their daily labour. You find selfish and barbarous notions about Repeal among the people. To be sure. Do you think the Barons at Runnymede knew any higher meaning for liberty than privileges and immunities to be enjoyed by themselves? They wanted freeholds like the poor Connaught men, and had as little sense of abstract right or wrong. Trust me, 'tis a sense which has to be sedulously cultivated, and by no means grows wild. But why don't you plant Reading Rooms among them? It would be pleasanter employment, to my thinking, than interchanging hospitalities with the Squire Ulicks and Squire Anthonys of the West."[1]

The Library of Ireland.

In the Library of Ireland the issue continued unbroken till public events interrupted it. The "History of the Volunteers," by MacNevin, was followed by the "Ballad Poetry of Ireland," by Gavan Duffy, the third volume on the list was a "Life of Wolfe Tone," by Thomas Davis, for which had to be substituted, under tragic circumstances, the "Life of Aodh O'Neill," by John Mitchel, a new recruit at that time. These were succeeded by memoirs of Irish writers by M'Carthy, and D'Arcy Magee, another recent recruit, a "National Story," by Carleton, a "History of the American Revolution," by Michael Doheny, "Collections of Songs and Ballads," by Barry and M'Carthy, and a "History of the Confederation of Kilkenny," by the Reverend Charles Meehan. Among volumes

[1] Duffy to MacNevin.

announced but never published were—"The Rebellion of 1798," by M. J. Barry, the "French Revolution," by David Cangley, the "History of Irish Manufactures," by John Gray, "History of the Great Popish Rebellion" (1641), by Charles Gavan Duffy. The *Nation* not only interpreted to the people and popularised these works, but supplemented them by others in the same spirit. At the opening of the New Year a series of papers was announced and immediately commenced which sufficiently indicates the nature and character of the education which its writers aimed to give to the people. This was the list of *Nation* essays :—

I. Sketches of Distinguished Irish Soldiers, Statesmen, Ecclesiastics, Artists, and Authors.
II. Papers on the Study of the Irish Language.
III. A Series of Critical Articles on Continental Literature.
IV. Historical Essays on Memorable or Obscure Periods of our National History.
V. Popular Summaries of the Principles and Facts of Political Science.
VI. A Series of Critical Papers on the Great English Poets.
VII. Biographical and Critical Essays upon Obscure Writers of Merit.
VIII. On Popular and National Sports.
IX. On the Social, Moral, and Intellectual Condition of the Labouring Classes, with suggestions for their Improvement.
X. Retrospective Reviews of the leading Irish Books in History, Fiction, and the Drama, intended as a guide to students and popular reading-rooms.
XI. Translations from the Irish.
XII. Accounts of Colonial and Continental Legislatures.
XIII. The Contemporary History of Europe.
XIV. Sketches of Modern Revolutions—France, Belgium, Canada, Greece, etc.

Maurice O'Connell on Davis.

Darrynane Abbey, 14*th October* 1845.

My Dear Duffy—I have not addressed you since the death of our beloved friend, because the crowd of condolers would give the air of conventional compliment even to an expression of sincere sorrow; and next, though not least, that I grieved to know that you had other and more sacred matters of sorrow. May the Giver of All Things console you in that bitterest of afflictions. I enclose a few verses framed, I think, in a tone which poor Davis himself would approve of—as my offering to his memory.[1]

Amidst this wilderness of song and testimonial, surely the most effectual tribute to his memory will not be neglected. His writings should be collected and published as soon as possible. They were his offerings to

[1] The verses will be found in the *Nation* of November 8th, 1845, and in the "Spirit of the Nation."

his country, and should be perpetuated. It will be an interesting study to trace the workings of his mind, and to point out to the future men of Ireland how much he did to advance her literature and her liberty, and in how short a space, by strenuous, unremitting devotion to her cause.

Yours, my dear Duffy, most truly,

MAURICE O'CONNELL

CHAS. GAVAN DUFFY, Esq.

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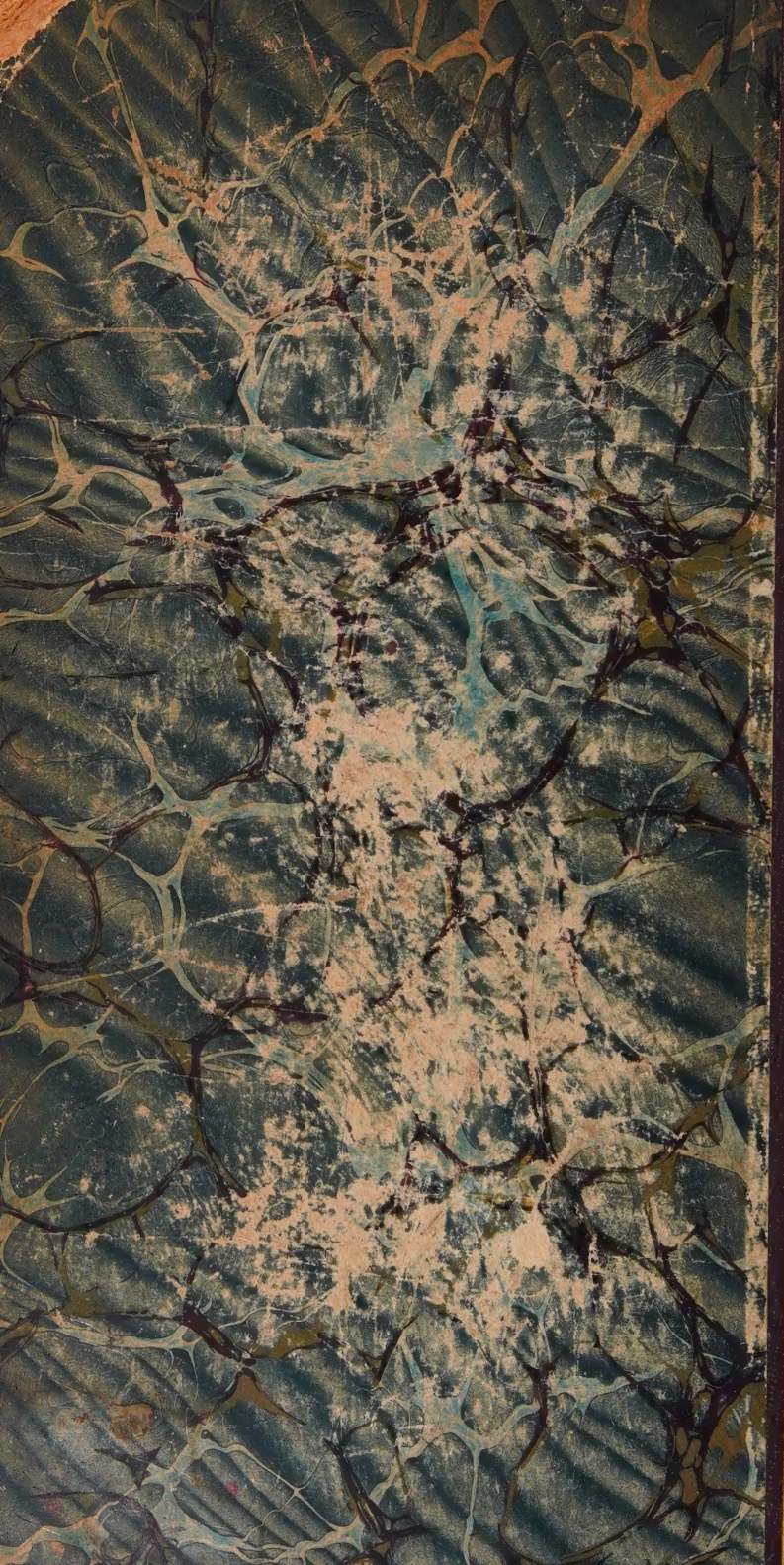
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